DI•VERSE LITERACY: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RAP AND HIP HOP PHONEMIC AWARENESS INSTRUCTION CENTERING CHILDREN WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS BLACK, BROWN, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR

By

Amber Lawson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education – Doctor of Philosophy

2025

ABSTRACT

While the education field continues to engage in debates about literacy instruction, the science of reading, and systemic inequities in early literacy education are ongoing, young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter primary grade classrooms across the United States and receive foundational literacy instruction that centers White Mainstream English and the experiences of the White dominant group of society due to systemic racism. As a result, many children engage in culturally and linguistically irrelevant literacy instruction that does not consider their identities, home languages, lived experiences, funds of knowledge, and various stages of literacy development, impeding their academic success in school. This mixed methods study, including quantitative and qualitative methodologies, constructs the Di•VERSE Literacy framework to examine the influence of the innovative curriculum I designed on children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color foundational literacy development, particularly in phonemic awareness, and children's experiences engaging with the curriculum. This study draws upon multiple strength and asset-based frameworks, including culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), culturally and historically responsive pedagogy (Muhammad, 2020, 2023), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012), and Hip-Hop-Based Education (Hill, 2009) to create space during phonics instruction for children to access their identities, home languages, and lived experiences that are racially and culturally influenced to advance their literacy development in culturally just ways.

Specifically, this case study highlights the perspectives and experiences of 13 first graders who self-identify as Black and Arab attending an urban intensive (Milner, 2012) public school in the US Midwest. As part of the study, I designed a three-week intervention including

15 lessons that aligned with multiple theoretical frameworks, education research, and state and national standards. The lessons were implemented by the children's teacher, who self-identified as White, and the children reflected on their experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy through induvial reflections including drawings and writing and during focus group interviews utilizing storytelling throughout the intervention. Additionally, children engaged in an individual pre- and post-assessment to demonstrate the influence of Di•VERSE Literacy on their phonemic awareness development and beginning reading and writing development.

While building upon and extending current educational research literature focusing on culturally responsive education, early literacy education, and Hip-Hop-Based Education, the findings highlight how young children who self-identify as Black and People of Color advanced their foundational literacy skills in culturally responsive ways. This study's findings also provide implications for teacher practice, school policy, and educational research to create opportunities for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to engage in culturally responsive foundational literacy instruction in US classrooms.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family, friends, and Oliver. Thank you for supporting me throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people (and pup) in my life who made my Ph.D. dream possible and my journey a reality. I could not have untaken this journey without my parents, Lavernia and Vernon Lawson. Thank you for your unconditional support throughout my schooling and lived experiences, from an early elementary learner to becoming an elementary teacher, and now an assistant literacy professor. I am forever grateful. To my siblings, niece, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. Thank you for your words of encouragement and for making the journey(s) enjoyable. To my pup, Oliver. Thanks for being by my side every step of the way. I'm glad to have you all in my life and part of my village.

I am incredibly grateful to my advisor, Dr. Joanne E. Marciano, and the dissertation committee. Thank you, Dr. Marciano, for generously supporting my passion and joy for early childhood classrooms by helping me establish my emerging scholarship. I am so happy I was recommended to take a course with you and chose you to guide me through the doctoral program. Dr. Dorinda J. Carter Andrews, it was a pleasure to have you as my first professor as a freshman and again as a doctoral student. Thank you for being a "mirror" and contributing to my inspiration to pursue a Ph.D. one day. Dr. Anne-Lise Halvorsen, your kindness and thoughtfulness have been tremendously appreciated. Thank you for your continued support as I transitioned into academia as an emerging scholar. Dr. Mariana Souto-Manning, I truly enjoyed our meetings to discuss my research ideas and having you as a thought partner. It was an honor to learn from you, considering my deep admiration for your work. Thank you all for your expertise and for helping me grow into the scholar I am today and hope to be.

Special thanks to my content collaboration team for helping me achieve my goal in bridging theory to practice by creating my innovative curriculum. Thank you, Vitorio Penzabene,

for your creative word play and for helping me create the Hip Hop ABCs. I could not have completed the alphabet without you. Thank you, Dilan Haung, for the beautiful illustrations and for helping me to create space in the classroom for children to see themselves. Thank you, Deante Alexander and Troy Burns, for producing, writing, and recording the Hip Hop song and helping me create space for children to hear themselves. Thank you, Jermaine Shufford, for helping with the audio engineering and providing children with soulful sonics during phonics instruction. Thank you, Asar Alexander, for sharing your perspectives and contributions as an early elementary learner, specifically as a second grader, during the curriculum design and for providing young children, specifically first graders, a "mirror." While Di•VERSE Literacy started as a dream, my content collaboration team helped me bring it to life!

Big thanks to Ms. Kos, the first graders, and their families for opening your classroom and allowing me to co-teach and learn alongside you. Words cannot express the joy I experienced as a teacher, researcher, and activist conducting this study with you. To my former kindergarteners, first graders, and their families, thank you for all the memories that inspired my research agenda. You will always have a special place in my heart. To my former classroom teachers, principals, and mentor teachers (whose names I use as pseudonyms throughout my scholarship), thank you for creating school communities I enjoyed being a part of and inspiring me to create school communities to do the same for students. Lastly, I want to mention the many scholars I met along the way. Thanks for helping me move my work forward and being there at the right time. While I consider my Ph.D. journey a beautiful struggle with its many joys and challenges, my teacher cup is full.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCSS Common Core State Standards

FL Foundational Literacy

FLD Foundational Literacy Development

FLI Foundational Literacy Instruction

FLS Foundational Literacy Skills

K-2 Kindergarten Through Second Grade

MAISAGELNELTF Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force

MK-12SELA Michigan K-12 Standards in English Language Arts

PA Phonemic Awareness

PAD Phonemic Awareness Development

PAI Phonemic Awareness Instruction

PAS Phonemic Awareness Skills

PK Pre-Kindergarten

NELP National Early Literacy Panel

NRP National Reading Panel

NYCDE New York City Department of Education

TTCC The Teacher of Color Collective

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

On the first day of school, millions of young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter classrooms across the United States (NCES, 2023). When children enter the classroom, they enter with their cultural, lived, and language experiences, which are often a part of their racial identities (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). As of 2022, roughly 55 percent of students attending public schools in the United States identified as members of Color and historically marginalized communities[1] (NCES, 2023). Contrastingly, 80 percent of teachers teaching in public schools were White middle-class individuals (NCES, 2023). When many White teachers enter the classroom, they enter with the limited familiarity of only their cultural, lived, and language experiences, and the unfamiliarity of the rich cultural, lived, and language experiences their students of Color bring to school as a result of systemic racism (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Because of systemic racism and this unfamiliarity, many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are unable to use their identities and lived experiences to scaffold their learning in the classroom (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). This increasing diversity or "demographic divide" (Gay & Howard, 2000, p. 1) between students from historically marginalized communities and many of their White teachers contributes to the outcome of the "culture and teaching gap" (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89). Carey and colleagues (2018) recognize the "culture and teaching gap" as the "cultural, often racial, disparity existing between teachers and

[1] Children from historically marginalized communities name children and their families who self-identify as Black, Latine, Brown, Arab, and People of Color.

students that impede school success for increasingly diverse student populations" (p. 89). As a result, many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color encounter educational disparities and inequities while striving to succeed in school, life, and society.

The outcome of the "culture and teaching gap" is one aspect of education that is crucial to acknowledge, considering the result of the gap prevents many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color from having access to an equitable education (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89). While the impact of the difference between the cultures of children and teachers is one of the fundamental contributors hindering young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color from receiving an equitable education, numerous underlying long-term disparities created the "culture and teaching gap," and makes its subsequent result plausible (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89). When considering the historical and current educational disparities that make the outcome of the "culture and teaching gap" plausible, it is evident that there is an urgent need for young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to be better supported in schools to receive an equitable education through instruction that is engaging, meaningful, and relatable (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89).

Statement of the Problem

The foundation of an equitable education ensures that all students, regardless of how they identify and where they are in their academic achievement, attain the same educational goals fairly and successfully while receiving individualized support to achieve those educational goals (Gay, 2023; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013). Muhammad (2023) adds that a "true and full" equitable education ensures that children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in a teaching and learning exchange that "is centered on justice, liberation, truth, and freedom, and free of bias and favoritism" (p. 33). For instance, when many White children

enter the classroom, they can use their language and literacy experiences to advance their learning, as there are countless parallels between their home experiences and the instruction they receive at school (Milner, 2020). Because many of their White teachers are knowledgeable and personally familiar with these experiences, teachers can recognize them and use them as assets to support many White children in advancing their academic achievement (Milner, 2020).

On the contrary, when many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter the classroom with their language and literacy experiences that are racially and or culturally influenced, many White teachers do not recognize or know how to recognize these experiences as assets from a bias-free and truthful perspective to scaffold children's academic success to provide them with a more equitable education to attain the same educational goals as their White counterparts (Gay, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023). Regardless of how children racially and or ethnically identify, children enter the classroom with their language and literacy experiences that should be used as assets to further their academic achievement in school and to receive an equitable education (Gay, 2000, 2023; Muhammad, 2023). Considering access to a high-quality, equitable education is a civil right (Love, 2015; Souto-Manning, 2016), and inclusion provides students with a sense of belonging in schools (Souto-Manning et al., 2022), it is essential for our youngest learners who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have access and engage in culturally inclusive instruction in their classrooms to advance their academic achievement (Muhammad, 2023) and to build a strong, solid literacy foundation in the primary grades of formal schooling (Shujaa, 1993).

Translanguaging Disparity Between Children's and Teachers' Linguistic Practices

During the primary years of formal schooling (Shujaa, 1993), specifically kindergarten and first grade, many children develop foundational literacy skills (FLS) which include academic language goals recognized by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (2021) and state standards such as the Michigan K-12 Standards in English Language Arts[2] (MK-12SELA) (2021). When young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in foundational literacy instruction (FLI) in classrooms that center CCSS (2021) or MK-12SELA (2021), they are limited to receiving all of their instruction in academic language or White Mainstream English (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). One of the reasons why children receive all of their FLI in White Mainstream English is because many of their White teachers' home language is White Mainstream English (NCES, 2023), and another reason is that curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies also create and develop literacy lessons in White Mainstream English (Au et al., 2016; Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015) to meet policy requirements like the CCSS (2021) and MK-12SELA (2021). Many education policies, White teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies limit instruction to White Mainstream English because this English language is considered an invisible norm and standard in the United States and in the classroom (Baker-Bell, 2020; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

At the same time, more than 29 percent of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter classrooms speaking Spanish or Arabic as their home language and or with family members whose home language is Spanish or Arabic (NCES, 2023). When children

[2] In Michigan, the standards are called Michigan K-12 Standards English Language Arts and aligns with the Common Core State Standards.

from the Latine and Arab communities enter the classroom, they enter with their lived and language experiences tied to their ancestral languages, providing them with a strong sense of identity (Flores, 2020; Louie & Sierschynski, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2016). When Latine and Arab children attend schools in the United States, they attend schools intending to receive a high-quality education similar to their White peers while sustaining their cultural integrity, including their home languages (Au et al., 2016). As they engage in FLI that is limited to White Mainstream English, many Latine and Arab children are viewed through a White dominant lens framed by raciolinguistic ideology that views them as lacking academic language skills or White Mainstream English and disregard their lived experiences and identities as well as the larger sociopolitical factors that shaped their experiences in schools (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Stires & Genishi, 2008). While children who self-identify as Brown and People of Color are adding White Mainstream English to their rich language repertoires in the classroom through their interactions with many White teachers during the teaching and learning exchange, simultaneously, their most valuable repertoire is undervalued by being ignored by teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals as a scaffold to support their learning as a result of being deemed as inferior by American society (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Louie & Sierschynski, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2016).

When children use Spanish and Arabic in the classroom, many teachers recognize their linguistic strengths as a valid linguistic system socially; however, their home languages are not recognized as strengths academically (Flores, 2020). Because their linguistic strengths are not recognized as academic strengths, teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals label children's academic

experiences as linguistic challenges that need to be remediated (Flores, 2020). Through remediation, Latine and Arab children are pulled out of their homeroom classrooms to receive additional support in White Mainstream English and placed into separate academic tracks as they progress through school, preventing them from receiving an equitable education (Flores, 2020). This type of remediation is often implemented because teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals often conflate children who self-identify as Latine and Arab as emergent bilingual children who need to develop White Mainstream English or academic language to succeed in US classrooms (Flores, 2020).

Instead of requiring children to develop academic language to be successful in school (Rosa & Flores, 2017) during FLI, teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals must create space for children to use their valuable home languages as assets to develop FLS (Souto-Manning, 2016). One way teachers can create space for children's home languages is by allowing children to translanguage during FLI. Through translanguaging, children will be able to use the languages in their linguistic repertoires as they see fit to complete educational tasks (Guzman-Orth et al., 2019) rather than being required to use only White Mainstream English to develop these skills. Once children develop these skills through familiar, meaningful, and relatable language experiences, children will be able to transfer these skills to additional languages, including White Mainstream English (Flores, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

To make this transfer of skills possible for children who self-identify as Black, Brown and People of Color, many White teachers should consider shifting their ideas about using home languages in the classroom. When teachers do not allow children to use their home languages in

the classroom, they view children's diverse languages from a Whiteness perspective rooted in colonialism that deems any language outside of White Mainstream English less than and needs to be corrected (Flores, 2020). When teachers shift how they view diverse home languages to a raciolinguistic perspective, many teachers will be able to adjust their focus from the linguistic practices of children as speakers and writers to teachers' linguistic practices as listeners and readers (Flores, 2020). As a result, many White teachers will have space to begin recognizing that children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter the classroom with rich language experiences developed throughout their lives. Then, teachers can use children's rich language experiences to advance their academic learning in the classroom.

Black Language Disparity Between Children's and Teachers' Linguistic Practices

While more than 29 percent of children enter the classroom with ties to Spanish and Arabic as their communities' ancestral languages, more than 17 percent of children who self-identify as Black enter classrooms with Black Language as theirs (NCES, 2023). Black Language is more than an English dialect or variety that is spoken by linguistic minorities (Washington & Seidenberg, 2021), as dialects are often socially devalued by the White dominant group of American society (Baker-Bell, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Black Language is a valid linguistic system that is "systematic with regular rules and restrictions at the lexical, phonological, and grammatical level" (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 1). Because it is systematic at the phonological level, it is also systematic at the phonemic level, which is a subcategory of phonological awareness and FLS. Furthermore, it is "rule-governed…[and]...spoken by a community of speakers connected by race, culture, identity, and language" (Washington & Seidenberg, 2021, p. 27). Considering Black Language is a valid language "with Black flava"

and features from West African Languages, it is highly valuable and vital to its speakers (Smitherman, 2006, p. 3).

Although Black Language is a valid language, it is not considered a valid linguistic system socially in many US classrooms as many teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals do not believe it belongs, limiting FLI to only White Mainstream English and hindering the educational outcomes of diverse student populations (Baker-Bell, 2020; Carey et al., 2018; Kifano & Smith, 2003; Souto-Manning et al., 2022; Washington & Seidenberg, 2021). Oftentimes, when White teachers encounter Black Language in the classroom, many teachers correct children's speech in White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2020). Additionally, some teachers of Color may internalize anti-Blackness due to the pervasiveness of Whiteness in this country and correct children's speech in White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2020). Correcting children's home languages in the classroom leads children to believe that White Mainstream English should be placed at the top of the racial apex in their classroom in addition to internalizing anti-Blackness (Baker-Bell, 2020). When young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color internalize anti-Blackness, they realize that their home language, which is often a part of their racial identities, is not welcome in the classroom, and essentially, neither are they (Baker-Bell, 2020; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Instead of correcting children's home languages, teachers must recognize the benefits of including children's home languages in the classroom and having exposure to additional English languages. Considering Black Language is systematic at the phonological level, teachers can incorporate Black Language during FLI by allowing children to orally manipulate and play with words from Black Language and White Mainstream English. As a result, Black children and

children who speak additional English languages will be able to develop FLS in a meaningful and relatable way while using their racial and cultural identities as assets. Additionally, children will recognize that White Mainstream English is not the “be-all and end-all” (Baker-Bell, 2020, p. 7). They will learn to value themselves and to value their classmates’ diverse ways of being while also advancing their academic achievement (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Hip Hop Disparity Existing Between Children’s and Teachers’ Cultural Experiences

In addition to entering classrooms with Black Language as many children’s home language, many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter classrooms with the "culture of Hip Hop present in their lives" (Love, 2015, p. 108). Some of their Hip Hop experiences include rap music, in addition to aesthetics, language, and knowledge of self (Anyiwo et al., 2021; Bridges, 2011; Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Love, 2015). Considering most rap music is written by speakers of Black Language, there is a connection between many children’s home language and their Hip Hop experiences, as Black Language and Hip Hop are not limited to the Black community (Love, 2015; Smitherman, 1997). Although Hip Hop is one of the most popular genres of music among Black youth (Anyiwo et al., 2002), Travis (2013) notes that the content woven into rap music can elevate Black youth’s cultural pride, and Dixson and colleagues (2009) found rap music to impact Black youth’s racial self-esteem positively. In addition to cultural pride and racial self-esteem, other scholars found rap music to advance students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color academic achievement in upper elementary and beyond (Alim & Paris, 2017; Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Love, 2014; Marciano et al., 2020; Petchauer, 2009).

Even though Hip Hop and rap music are beneficial and culturally responsive resources that have resulted in affirming educational gains for students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color, many primary grade teachers do not incorporate Hip Hop and rap music in the classroom (Love, 2015). One of the reasons why they do not incorporate Hip Hop music is that many teachers have limited familiarity with commercial rap music (Emdin, 2010; Love, 2015), demonstrating a disparity between children and many teachers' Hip Hop experiences. If primary grade teachers could recognize the culture of Hip Hop as a highly prominent influence on children's "worldviews and behaviors" (Anyiwo et al., 2021, p. 614), many teachers could recognize some of the experiences and values children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color bring to school as assets to scaffold children's learning such as their Hip Hop experiences including rap music.

Disparity Existing Between Children's and Teachers' Literacy Experiences

Another disparity existing between young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and many White teachers that contribute to the outcome of children experiencing educational inequities includes literacy and how individuals define it. According to the CCSS (2021) and the MK-12SELA (2021), literacy is defined as four main domains and capabilities: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Considering the English Language Arts CCSS are "rooted in Whiteness" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 54) and implemented in 41 states across the country for literacy instruction, many teachers use this definition to define literacy to implement instruction; however, considering culture impacts people's ways of being and existing in the world, defining literacy as the four domains and capabilities through a Whiteness lens is not enough. As Kirkland (2013) notes, "There is no single [or universal] definition of literacy, but at a given time, who is using it defines it" (p. 18). Sociocultural theories of literacy call for

students' lived experiences and perspectives to be included in curriculum and instruction (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Muhammad, 2023; Rogoff et al., 2003; Wilson, 2007). Because of this cultural influence, Scribner (1984) notes that, as a society, we are unable to agree on a single definition of literacy because we have different ideas about how we value and use literacy in our day-to-day lives. Therefore, literacy is sociocultural.

Because of the different values children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and many of their teachers place on the definition of literacy, many White teachers may implement color-blindness and melting pot approaches in the classroom when they only recognize and value their literacy experiences from a Whiteness perspective (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Milner, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2012). Additionally, some teachers of Color may also implement color-blindness and melting pot approaches in the classroom by defining literacy from a Whiteness perspective as a result of internalized anti-Blackness (Baker-Bell, 2020; Kohli, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Milner (2010), Villegas, and Lucas (2012) seconded Kirkland and Scriber's notions by stating that color-blindness and melting pot approaches are harmful and dehumanizing to children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color because they prevent many teachers from acknowledging how diverse individuals experience school, such as FLI, society, and understanding other people's ways of being that are racially and culturally influenced. The same approaches are equally applicable and harmful when applied to many teachers' belief in a universal definition of literacy as they implement FLI in the classroom with children from historically marginalized communities (Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Historically and currently, many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are developing FLS using their White teachers' definitions of literacy and their literacy standards (Carey et al., 2018; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). However, Kirkland

(2011) argues that literacy experiences should fit children like clothes. When literacy experiences fit children like clothes, these experiences become an extension of themselves (Kirkland, 2011). For instance, when White children engage in FLI that is in White Mainstream English, their literacy experiences are an extension of their home language, lived experiences, and values (Kirkland, 2011; Milner, 2020). When children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in FLI that is limited to White Mainstream English, their literacy experiences in the classroom feel like a *school uniform* made from "fabrics of socialization" (Kirkland, 2011, p. 206) that were not designed for them and allow them to see themselves through distorted lenses (Bishop, 1990). Therefore, schools must adjust and adapt to children's cultural and racial experiences in order to move towards a "pedagogy of communicative belonging" (Souto-Manning et al., 2022, p. 1089) to better support their literacy development, instead of expecting children to adjust and adapt to the White dominant literacy culture of schools (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023).

Hence, when young children's home language differs from White Mainstream English or academic language, the language of whiteschooling (Baker-Bell, 2020; Flores, 2020; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022), they are more likely to experience challenges while developing reading and writing skills in the classroom (Souto-Manning et al., 2022; Washington & Seidenberg, 2021). Regardless of young children's diversified backgrounds, rich experiences, and valuable funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994), children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are developing literacy skills in schools using "an ideological model of literacy that is shaped by power, context, and history" of the United States (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010, p. 3). White supremacy allows White Mainstream English and White ways of knowing and existing in the world to be considered invisible, neutral, and the norm in literacy classrooms as

well as anti-Black (Baker-Bell, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Since there is no single or universal definition of literacy, the term must be owned by its users at any given time for those users' intended purposes in any given social context (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

Meanwhile, the term has been borrowed from the White dominant group of American society by historically marginalized communities who have been forced to view literacy through the White dominant lens in schools (Baker-Bell, 2020; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Viewing literacy norms and expectations through the White dominant lens harms and dehumanizes young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and have been historically marginalized in schools because they should not have to eliminate or erase their cultural, linguistic, racial, and or ethnic identities to excel in school which is one of the continuous, gross outcomes that continue to hinder the education of children from historically marginalized communities (Baker-Bell, 2020; Carey et al., 2018; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris, 2012; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Because of these disparities and gross continuous outcomes, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to fill gaps in the research literature by establishing the importance of recognizing and affirming children's racial and cultural identities during literacy instruction.

Background of the Problem

Another continuous, gross outcome that continues to hinder the education of children from historically marginalized communities is the result of the education debt, which Ladson-Billings (2006) recognizes as one of America's long-term disparities. She identifies the education debt as a cumulative result of the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral deficits that work together to make the education debt possible (Ladson-Billings, 2006). At the

same time, Petchauer and colleagues (2015) and Rogers-Ard and colleagues (2012) also recognize racial, economic exclusion, in addition to racially biased teacher licensure exams and racially biased definitions of teacher quality, as additional long-term disparities related to the education debt and contributors to the hindrance of educational inequities experienced by students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color (Carey et al., 2018).

Education Debt

Historically, “the legacy of educational inequities in the United States" was shaped by three main factors, “race [and ethnicity], class, and gender” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 5). Today, race and ethnicity continue to be the most influential factors that prevent students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color from receiving an equitable education that began during the founding of this nation (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Until emancipation, White men legally forbade the Black community from receiving an education as the Black community was considered inferior (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023). Although Blacks were legally allowed to attend freedom schools, schools created “to liberate the hearts and minds” of Black students from inequities and injustices (Muhammad, 2023, p. 68), they used classroom resources that were created for White students, outdated, and no longer of use to them, creating a deficit between the type of instruction Black students received compared to White students (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Muhammad & Moodie, 2022).

While Black students faced numerous unjust circumstances in receiving an equitable education, so did students from the Indigenous People’s community. Centuries ago, children from the Indigenous People’s community were forced to attend boarding schools created by White people *to save them from themselves* as they were also considered inferior (Ladson-

Billings, 2006; Muhammad, 2023). During this time, Indigenous students received instruction that deliberately erased their home language and assimilated them into White ways of existing in the world, preventing them from comfortably living on their reservations and losing a sense of cultural belonging that continues to impact future generations (Au et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Latine students equally encountered unjust educational deficits for being considered inferior by attending racially segregated schools with unequal resources and conditions, reflecting their historical and ongoing exclusion from receiving a high-quality, equitable education due to the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Another deficit contributing to the outcome of the difference between the cultures of children and teachers is families from historically marginalized communities' exclusion from decision-making that impacted and continues to impact the quality of their children's education. While families who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color always advocated for high-quality education for their children in the past and present, their advocacy was and is often "muted and marginalized" by the prevalence of Whiteness in the education system (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 7). Families who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color faced and still face obstacles from exclusion from democratic participation and the civic process (Graff & Duffy, 2017), which also prevented and still prevents children from receiving an equitable education (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Another series of deficits that contributes to the education debt and the outcome of the difference between the cultures of children and teachers is racial, economic exclusion. When Black students in the South were legally allowed to attend schools, they attended schools for shorter periods of time, considering many Black students worked on farms in comparison to their White counterparts who came from financially secure families and could attend school for the

entire academic year (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Decades later, after the historic desegregation cases, including *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), historically marginalized communities of Color continued to experience racial, economic exclusion until today. These cases highlighted the notion that "separate is never equal," considering separate schools allowed for differential funding (Ladson-Billings, 2006). And differential funding allowed predominantly White communities to receive more funding than predominantly Black and Brown communities. Separate schools also called attention to the educational value America places on students who belong to the White dominant group of society compared to students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and belong to historically marginalized groups of society (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

In addition to racial, economic exclusion of unequal school funding, many college students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience similar racial, economic exclusion in becoming certified teachers to provide students with culturally responsive educational experiences. Many colleges and universities offer teacher preparation programs requiring college students to complete months-long unpaid student teaching before receiving their teaching certificate (Rogers-Ard, 2012). While many White students can complete unpaid student teaching due to their families' financial stability, many college students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color face financial barriers as their families may not be able to support them financially as they complete unpaid student teaching as a result of racial, economic exclusion (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012). In addition to unpaid student teaching, students who self-identify as Black, brown, and People of Color also face the financial burden of tuition, studying resources, teacher licensure exams, fingerprinting fees, and other requirements for becoming

certified teachers (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012), further contributing to the differences between the cultures of students and teachers in US classrooms.

Exclusion of Teachers of Color

In addition to financial barriers, outcomes of the historic landmark desegregation cases, *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), also contributes to the differences between the cultures of students and teachers and prevents children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color from receiving an equitable education today. Although racial and ethnic segregation of students in public schools became unconstitutional (Au et al., 2016; Fenwick, 2023), there were two vital outcomes to note that are instrumental to the differences between White teachers and diverse student populations. One of those vital outcomes is that Black students began attending White-led schools, and the other is that most Black teachers became unemployed during the integration process, creating a predominantly White teaching force and a predominantly Black student population in urban intensive communities (Bell, 2004, 2020; Fairclough, 2007; Fenwick, 2023; Millner, 2012; Rogers-Ard, 2012). Instead of Black students learning from Black teachers who provided them with tailored instruction that centered Blackness and considered their learning styles, culture, and lived experiences, Black students began learning from White teachers who used White-framed curriculum selected by White superintendents, board members, and principals who did not share the same understanding, expectations, and norms as Black teachers (Carey et al., 2018; Fairclough, 2007; Fenwick, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2020).

Roughly five decades later, White superintendents, board members, and principals and school districts serving students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color continued to adopt and mandate White-framed curriculum, and students from historically

marginalized communities continued to receive instruction from primarily White teachers (Carey et al., 2018; Fairclough, 2007; Fenwick, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2020; Milner, 2020). After schools were racially integrated, teachers of Color continued to be excluded from the teaching force in other ways, contributing to the differences between the cultures of students and teachers. When more recent federal policies were put into place, such as No Child Left Behind, the *goal* was to create a "high-quality teaching force… [and] to address the shortage of permanent, certified teachers" in urban intensive communities (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012, p. 454). However, policymakers neglected to acknowledge the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006) and historically marginalized communities of Color experiences with education in this nation. Policymakers also disregarded communities of Color funds of knowledge (Moll & González,1994) by requiring all teachers to pass teacher licensure exams, which were designed through racially biased lenses, and defined teacher quality through racially biased lenses as well, which has been weaponized against historically marginalized communities of Color ever since (Fenwick, 2023).

While teacher licensure exams are considered a basic requirement for receiving teacher certification, they are racially biased against teachers of Color (Petchauer et al., 2015). These exams do not consider teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994), home languages, and lived experiences as crucial factors that shape teachers of Color performance on these exams (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012). Instead, these exams assess teachers' academic ability from the White perspective. Therefore, standardized tests, such as teacher licensure exams, "were designed specifically to [continue] segregat[ing] society" based on racist assumptions (Knaus, 2011, p. 57). Au (2009) adds that they were also designed to "reinforce social control over historically [marginalized

communities]" (p. 39). When teacher licensure exams lack culturally and racially responsive content, exams limit teaching positions to White teachers to teach in communities with diverse student populations, including those who have been historically marginalized.

While teacher licensure exams reflect racial bias and the inferiority of historically marginalized communities of Color, so do definitions of teacher quality. Many factors shape definitions of teacher quality, including "how educators define knowledge, conceive of evaluation processes, and limited exposure to and valuing of culturally responsive approaches" (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012, p. 454). When definitions of teacher quality do not consider communities of Color racial experiences and cultural teaching strategies shaped by their identities, teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color face additional barriers to getting into and remaining in classroom leadership roles as teachers (Fenwick, 2023; Rogers-Ard et al., 2012). As a result, communities of Color are led to believe that White individuals are high-quality teachers and are better suited to teach in urban intensive communities than actual community members (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012). As another result, administrators are led to believe that hiring teachers of Color in their schools will "decrease the quality of teachers" further contributing to the difference between the cultures of students and teachers (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012, p. 454).

Internalized Racial and Cultural Confliction Experienced by Teachers of Color

Although teacher licensure exams and definitions of teacher quality reflect racial bias and the inferiority of historically marginalized communities of Color, about 16 percent of teachers from these communities pass racially biased exams that have been weaponized against their communities, understand how to define teacher quality from a Whiteness perspective, and overcome barriers of racial, economic exclusion to secure leadership roles in US public school

classrooms (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; NCES, 2023; The Teacher of Color Collective [TTCC] & Souto-Manning, 2021). As members of some of the same racial and cultural communities as children in US classrooms, teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter classrooms with various levels of familiarity with children's cultural, lived, and language experiences that are often a part of children's racial identities (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). Many of them also share some of the same cultural, lived, and language experiences as children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in their classrooms (Muhammad, 2023). Through these shared experiences and levels of familiarity, teachers of Color are more likely to provide children with culturally responsive experiences that present children with more equitable, meaningful, and relatable educational opportunities (Kohli, 2014; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

In addition to understanding children's experiences, many teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color also recognize the prevalence of Whiteness throughout US schools (TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021). Many teachers of Color understand that the education system can cause historically marginalized communities of Color to internalize anti-Blackness and racism, and can negatively impact children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color perceptions of themselves, their communities, and their educational experiences (Kohli, 2014; Kohli & Picower, 2017; TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021). In other words, many teachers of Color recognize that the experiences children of Color have in school can lead them to believe their racial and cultural communities are indeed inferior (Kohli, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Knowing the negative impact schools can have on children of Color's education and self-worth, many teachers of Color strive to provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and

People of Color with a “racially empowering education” (Kohli, 2014, p. 368) through culturally responsive and affirming experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021).

However, providing children a “racially empowering education” is complex when teachers of Color experience countless obstacles in their role as lead teachers (Milner et al., 2013; TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021). One of the obstacles teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color face is limited agency and autonomy in their classrooms to support students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color academic achievement (Dixon et al., 2019; TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021). Although teachers are aware of the importance and impact of students being able to see themselves represented positively in the classroom and curriculum (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), teachers are unable to supplement White-framed curriculum with frameworks and resources designed by People of Color to be meaningful, engaging, and relatable to their students of Color (Dixon et al., 2019). Teachers are unable to provide students with culturally responsive educational experiences because policymakers, superintendents, board members, and principals mandate the use of White-framed curriculum in addition to other rules and policies that limit teachers of Color's agency and autonomy (Dixon et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998; TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021).

Because there is a conflict between teachers of Color's goals as lead teachers and this limitation, many teachers who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color begin to feel uncomfortable, knowing that they are contributing to a system that perpetuates educational disparities and harms students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color (Dixon et al., 2019; TTCC & Souto-Manning, 2021). As a result, some teachers of Color begin to leave the education field despite overcoming many barriers to becoming lead teachers. In response to

their departure from the field, their positions are typically filled with predominantly White teachers contributing to the differences between children and teachers' cultures, ultimately impacting the quality of education children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color receive in US classrooms. Even though America is a country that prides itself on democratic values, the education debt, racial economic exclusion, teacher licensure exams, and definitions of teacher quality reflect the disparity between what America knows is right, and what America is actually doing in relation to educating it's children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color (Ladson-Billings, 2006). In response to America's long-term disparities that hinder the education of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color, I positioned myself as a co-teacher through my curriculum design of Di•VERSE Literacy to fill gaps in the research literature by providing children with FLI that is racially empowering from someone who has various levels of familiarity with their cultural, lived, and language experiences.

Rationale for the Study

For young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to reach their full academic potential in foundational literacy, they must have access to culturally and linguistically responsive educational experiences (Souto-Manning, 2016). Teachers must also be conscious of the resources they use with children and the pedagogies they implement. Historically, many teachers use basal readers as a curriculum resource for literacy instruction; however, curriculum includes little diversity and center Whiteness (Au et al., 2016; Milner, 2020). Au and colleagues (2016) recognize this intentional limitation as "a part of secret propaganda impacting the lives of students of Color, reproducing an inexplicable feeling that one's experiences, histories, and knowledge are not valued" (p. 2). Bishop (1990) adds that many

children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are learning to read and understand the "American" life in children's books that omit or scarcely mention them in general, yet along in positive affirming ways, as another limitation (p. ix). Therefore, young children from historically marginalized communities must encounter pedagogies and curriculum that view their home languages, lived experiences, and racial identities as "*at promise* instead of *at risk*" (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995, p. 30). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to fill gaps in the research literature by creating a classroom resource that centers and recognizes children's strengths and assets to advance their literacy development in primary grades and beyond. This will allow children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to reach their full academic potential while seeing themselves in positive, affirming ways in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

As a Black scholar interested in making foundational literacy (FL) culturally responsive for young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in kindergarten through second grade (K-2), my research examined the problem as I have defined it by providing children with Di•VERSE Literacy: A Culturally Responsive Rap and Hip Hop Phonemic Awareness Curriculum to incorporate children's lived and language experiences and culturally diverse children's literature as assets to advance their FLS, specifically, phonemic awareness development (PAD) while also disrupting Whiteness in the science of reading (Milner, 2020). Considering teachers must be conscious of the resources they use with children, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to place children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color at the center of instruction while developing FLS. Through observations of children's experiences with Di•VERSE Literacy, this study can "lead to important insights and understandings"

(Compton-Lilly, 2021, p. 12) about how children develop phonemic awareness (PA) through instruction that views their lived and language experiences as assets (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019) compared to more traditional FL curriculum that centers Whiteness (Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023). My dissertation research contributes new knowledge to the education field of Hip-Hop-Based Education and culturally responsive education in primary grade classrooms to advance children's PA while honoring and valuing their cultural, lived, and language experiences as well as their racial identities.

Research Questions

To provide young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with culturally responsive Hip-Hop-Based Educational learning experiences during FLI in relation to the cultural differences children and many teachers bring to school, the following research questions guided this study:

- How does Di•VERSE Literacy influence the phonemic awareness development of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color?
- How do children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience Di•VERSE Literacy?

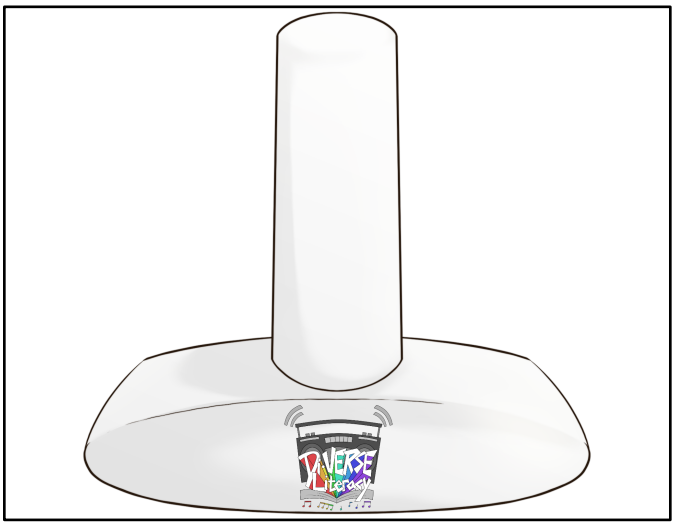
Potential Significance of the Study

This study aims to alleviate the outcome of impeded academic achievement for young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color by providing them with culturally responsive learning experiences that are meaningful and relatable while developing PA with regards to the differences between the cultures of children and teachers. By designing Di•VERSE Literacy, which was informed by culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023),

culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014), and Hip-Hop-Based Education (Hill, 2009), young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color were placed at the center of instruction by including their identities, lived and language experiences during FL, disrupting Whiteness in the science of reading (Milner, 2020). I use the early childhood stacking toy as a visual to demonstrate how each framework built on each other to inform the curriculum design represented by the toy's "base," adding the "largest ring" or most influential framework first (Figure 1). Through these experiences, I expected children who participated in Di•VERSE Literacy to make more significant gains in FL, specifically, PA than traditional phonemic awareness instruction (PAI), and children could connect sounds to print explicitly. I also expected children to enjoy their experiences using Di•VERSE Literacy as the curriculum allowed young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to be positively represented in their schooling in accurate and genuine ways (Souto-Manning et al., 2018) while experiencing a sense of belonging in schools that's been missing historically and currently in many US classrooms (Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Figure 1

Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Design of Di•VERSE Literacy



This study will add to the research literature on culturally responsive learning experiences of young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color. It will particularly interest teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals committed to striving toward equitable literacy instruction for children from historically marginalized communities. It also addresses gross inequities in children's access to equitable education opportunities. Teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals concerned about improving the educational conditions of young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in primary grades and beyond must uphold teaching practices and use resources that honor children's cultural and racial backgrounds and identities while advancing their foundational literacy development (FLD).

CHAPTER 2 – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In many primary grade classrooms across the United States, teachers engage children in PAI to lay the foundation of their journey to becoming proficient readers and writers. For example, Detroit Public Schools Community District's appointed superintendent selected EL Education, an equity centered literacy curriculum, as curriculum reform to provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color across the district with research-based practices to advance children's literacy development (Chambers, 2018). During EL Education's foundational skills block of instruction that aligns with MK-12SELA (2021) and the CCSS (2021), children engage in weekly phonological awareness routines that centers academic language to support children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in making connections between phonemes and graphemes to read and write (eleducation.org). Chicago Public Schools launched their district designed curriculum, Skyline, to better serve and connect children across all schools by offering high-quality, culturally responsive materials for instruction that are also research and standards-based (Burke & Koumpilova, 2021). Through Skyline's daily instruction that also aligns with the CCSS (2021), children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in phonological awareness activities designed to support their decoding and encoding development, allowing children to transfer these skills to actual reading and writing while centering White Mainstream English.

New York Public Schools also designed their district curriculum, the Universal Mosaic Curriculum, as part of their "commitment to every [child]" by providing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with standards-aligned instruction that recognizes and affirms diversity to be implemented in fall 2023 and beyond (NYCDE, 2023). However, before implementing their "inclusive" curriculum, children in primary grade classrooms received

instruction using one of three basal readers or literacy curriculum, including EL Education, Wit and Wisdom, or HMH into Reading that centered White Mainstream English and CCSS (2021). These are three commercial literacy programs that have been found to be effective in building children's FLS, according to the district (NYCDE, 2023). Oakland Unified School District also engages children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in various commercial literacy programs to build their literacy foundation by using a combination of EL Education, the district's SIPPS curriculum or Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words, and the Heggerty Curriculum (ousd.org, 2022). Using a combination of the literacy programs that centers the CCSS (2021), children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color receive phonological awareness instruction in White Mainstream English to develop FLS that are key to becoming proficient readers and writers. Although children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color across the country are using various literacy curriculum that align to the CCSS (2021) to develop PA, it is evident that teachers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals recognize the importance of children developing a solid foundation in PA to advance their literacy development throughout school.

Phonemic Awareness Development

To support young children in developing a solid foundation in PA, most children engage in FLI that supports their development in phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate units of sound in oral language, including words (e.g., *hat* as /hăt/), syllables (e.g., *cannot* as /kăn-nŏt/), rhymes (e.g., /lŏg/ and /dŏg/), onsets and rimes (e.g., *jump* as /j-ŭmp/), and phonemes (e.g., *at* as /ă//t/) (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Lindsey, 2022; Mesmer & Kambach, 2022; Piasta & Hudson, 2022; Yopp, 1992). Many children

engage in instruction using this developmental progression because it is typically easier for children to begin manipulating larger units of oral language, such as words and syllables, gradually progressing towards smaller units, such as phonemes (Anthony et al., 2003; National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2000, 2008).

When children are ready to manipulate the smallest unit, they begin developing PA, a subset of phonological awareness. A solid foundation in PA ensures that young children understand the smallest unit of sounds in oral language. PA is the ability to identify and manipulate individual phonemes or sounds orally (Ehri, 2020; Lindsey, 2022; Mesmer & Kambach, 2022; Yopp, 1992). Once children develop this understanding, they can connect phonemes to graphemes or recognize spelling patterns to read and write. When children are ready to isolate individual sounds in words, they start by identifying and isolating beginning, ending, and medial sounds in words, followed by blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds in words (Lindsey, 2022; NELP, 2000, 2008). Therefore, PA is essential in young children's FLD and their journey to becoming proficient readers and writers.

While researchers recognize the importance of phonological and PA in literacy development, some researchers found that young children can bypass the full phonological awareness developmental progression, beginning with large units of oral language and moving to small units to develop PA successfully. For example, when Carson and colleagues (2013) examined young children whose home language was mainstream New Zealand English academic growth in phonological awareness, particularly in rhyming, beginning and ending phoneme identification, blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes, they found children who engaged in the short, high intensity phonological awareness instruction with an emphasis on PA raised their literacy profiles or academic learning compared to children who continued to use a

more traditional literacy curriculum that emphasized phonics instruction but did not emphasis phonological awareness.

When Ukrainetz and colleagues (2011) examined the impact of PAI, particularly blending and segmenting phonemes, without following the phonological awareness progression of manipulating larger units of sound first, they found preschool children they observed to be mostly White with English as their home language advanced their understanding of blending and segmenting phonemes without being taught to blend and segment syllables first. When Becker and Sylvan (2021) provided White and Asian preschool children with an articulation and PA intervention, they found young children made additional academic gains in phonemic segmentation compared to children who engaged in a traditional literacy program alone. The findings from these studies suggest that young children can begin developing phonemic awareness skills (PAS) without having to develop phonological awareness skills first. For these reasons, Di•VERSE Literacy begins the first unit with identifying beginning sounds in words instead of beginning instruction with larger units of oral language.

Phonemic Awareness in Children's Literacy Development

Some education policy (CCSS, 2021; MK-12SELA, 2021) and literacy curriculum include this PA developmental progression for children because PA plays a crucial role in becoming proficient readers and writers (Castles et., 2018; NELP, 2000, 2008). While children are developing PA and alphabet knowledge, teachers can support children in recognizing phoneme-grapheme correspondences through phonics instruction (Ehri, 2014; Mesmer & Kambach, 2022; Piasta & Hudson, 2022). As children increase their knowledge of orthographic patterns, children can use this understanding to decode and spell new words (Ehri, 2014). As children learn additional word reading strategies such as analogy, prediction, and sight (Ehri,

2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998), children further advance their development of word recognition. Word recognition is the ability to recognize words automatically, effortlessly, and accurately (Lindsey, 2022). Through sight word recognition, readers can recognize words immediately when they have multiple previous encounters with the words and know their spelling, pronunciation, and meaning by memory (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998). When children can read words immediately, they do not have to use their attention and effort to decode individual words (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Instead, they can use their attention and focus on the meaning of texts, which is the ultimate goal of reading (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001).

Before readers reach this ultimate goal of reading, they must develop the main literacy components necessary to comprehend texts. Many scholars recognize decoding as one of those main components (Blevins, 2021; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Lindsey, 2022; Mesmer, 2019; Scarborough, 2001). In the Simple View of Reading, Gough and Tunmer (1986) recognize decoding and language comprehension as two main components readers must develop to comprehend texts. They recognize decoding as the ability to quickly, accurately, and silently read words in isolation while using phoneme-grapheme correspondences within the words (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). Additionally, Gough and Tunmer (1986) considered these components to develop independently and sequentially. More recently, Hoover and Tunmer (2020) expanded the Simple View of Reading by broadening the term *decoding* to *word recognition* and now recognize the subcomponents of word recognition. In the Reading Rope, Scarborough (2001) adds to the Simple View of Reading by recognizing the alphabetic principle and phoneme-grapheme correspondences as subcomponents or decoding skills. By recognizing the alphabet principle and

phoneme-grapheme correspondences, Scarborough (2001) emphasizes that this fundamental understanding allows readers to decode with minimal effort and use most of their cognitive energy to comprehend texts. In the Active View of Reading, Duke and Cartwright (2021) add to the Simple View and the Reading Rope by recognizing word recognition and language comprehension as main components that are shared and overlapped, contributing to the ultimate goal of reading comprehension. Because the components overlap, Duke and Cartwright (2021) suggest that these two constructs, including their subcomponents, should be bridged together to support reading comprehension better. Based on these reading models, researchers recognize the importance of decoding and the FLS of decoding as alphabet knowledge and PA as central contributors in children's journey to becoming proficient readers.

Considering children's journey to becoming proficient readers is complex, Ehri (1998, 2020) recognizes multiple stages of word recognition so that teachers can better support children in developing word recognition at their various stages. Additionally, the stages recognize the knowledge children use and must develop throughout their journey to becoming proficient readers (Ehri, 2020). Young children begin building the foundation of their word recognition during the pre-alphabetic phase of word recognition. During the pre-alphabetic phase (Gough & Hillinger, 1980; Juel, 1991), children, typically in kindergarten and first grade, use visual and contextual clues of their developing alphabetic knowledge to recognize written words (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983). For example, children might be able to recognize the tail in the last letter in *dog* and the humps in the middle letter in *camel* (Ehri, 2020; Gough et al.1983). When children read during this stage, they read words by sight, such as *stop* from their frequent encounters with stop signs and names of places in their community, such as restaurants and stores (Ehri & McCormick, 1998). However, when children encounter the same

words in print without context, they may have difficulty reading them because they do not know how to attend to letters yet as readers (Maso, 1980). At this stage, children are unable to recognize phoneme-grapheme correspondences because they do not understand that letters in written language represent sounds in oral language (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998). For example, when Ehri and Wilce (1985) provided kindergarteners who all spoke English with a series of phonetically spelled words and visually distinctive non phonetic words, they found children in the pre-alphabetic phase used visually distinctive visual cues better than phoneme-grapheme correspondences and PA to read the words. When Masonheimer and colleagues (1984) examined preschool children from various racial and ethnic backgrounds ability to recognize environmental print, they found children could recognize words in context, but they could not recognize the words out of context or with a letter change, demonstrating that children in the pre-alphabetic stage do not attend to letters. To support young children's FLD in this stage, teachers should provide children with explicit instruction in alphabet knowledge to direct their attention to phoneme-grapheme correspondences to use as a scaffold to begin decoding words phonetically (Ehri & McCormick, 1998). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to provide children with explicit instruction to review alphabet knowledge, develop PAS, and explicitly direct their attention to phoneme-grapheme correspondences in words with scaffolded support incorporated in the lessons.

As children shift from the pre-alphabetic phase to the partial-alphabetic phase (Mason, 1980) of word recognition, they develop a deeper understanding of the alphabetic principle and PA. At this stage in their development, children begin using phoneme-grapheme correspondences to decode familiar words (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998). Although children are in the beginning stage of decoding, they are not ready to use decoding as a word

reading strategy independently because they are still developing their alphabetic knowledge (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998). When they read, they continue using visual and contextual cues in addition to some phoneme-grapheme correspondences to read unfamiliar words (Stahl & Murray, 1994). For example, when Ehri and Wilce (1985) provided kindergarteners who all spoke English with a series of phonetically spelled words and visually distinctive non phonetic words, they found children in the partial-alphabetic phase used their knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences and PA to decode the words instead of using the visual cues in the words. When Levin and Ehri (2009) examined preschool children whose home language was Hebrew ability to recognize classmates' names on cubbies in their classroom in context and out of context, they found children who were knowledgeable of many phoneme-grapheme correspondences could recognize some of the names in isolation, demonstrating their advancement in word recognition from the pre-alphabetic phase. To support children's literacy development in the partial-alphabetic phase, teachers should encourage children to "stretch out the sounds in spoken words" and select letters to represent those sounds while using invented spelling to spell unknown words (Ehri & McCormick, 1998, p. 147). Researchers (Ehri & Wilce, 1987; Henderson, 1981; Read, 1970) found these approaches to advance children's development in word recognition. Based on the studies' findings, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to provide children with explicit instruction in encoding or writing words. First, children segmented phonemes in words and then spelled each sound in the word, representing the sound with graphemes or letters through scaffolded instruction and opportunities to utilize invented spelling.

As children shift from the partial alphabetic phase to the full alphabetic phase (Gough & Hillinger, 1980; Juel, 1991) of word identification, they use their alphabet knowledge and PAD to recognize major phoneme-grapheme correspondences to decode unknown words successfully.

Although children have successfully discovered how to decode texts, they typically decode words slowly, considering they consciously and deliberately read the individual sounds represented by letters and then slide through the sounds to read the words (Chall, 1983; Ehri & McCormick, 1998). As they store newly read decodable words to their growing sight word memory and vocabulary, children begin to use analogy as a word recognition strategy to connect familiar words to unfamiliar words. For example, when Gonzalez-Frey and Ehri (2021) examined decoding methods taught to kindergarteners who identified as White, Black, Brown, and Asian that used continuous stretching of identified sounds in words with and without a break before blending, they found children decoded more new words quickly and accurately when they did not take a break before sliding through all the sounds to read the new words. To support children in the full-alphabetic phase of word identification, teachers should create ample opportunities for children to practice decoding words in and out of context so children can learn how to decode quicker and pay less attention to individual phoneme-grapheme correspondences (Ehri & McCormick, 1998). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to include numerous opportunities for children to decode words, phrases, and sentences with scaffolded support within the lessons.

As children shift to the consolidated-alphabetic phase (Frith, 1985), which begins during the full-alphabetic phase, they use knowledge of larger units of oral language, such as graphosyllabic units to read more complex spelling patterns made up of graphophonic units or phoneme-grapheme correspondences (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Juel, 1983). During this phase, children, typically in second grade through eighth grade, learn various word parts, including affixes (e.g., -ing), root words, onsets, rimes (e.g., -at), and syllables. They learn the pronunciation and meaning of chucks of letters to consciously and deliberately process fewer

units while reading to keep their attention and focus on comprehending texts. By recognizing and reading chunks of letters in words, children can accurately decode words, advance their fluency development (Juel, 1983), and expand their sight word memory and vocabulary (Ehri, 1995). For example, when Bhattacharya & Ehri (2004) provided middle and high school students who identified as Brown, Black, White, and Asian with explicit instruction in blending and segmenting graphosyllabic units in multisyllabic words, they found explicit instruction in analyzing graphosyllabic units in multisyllabic words advanced their reading and spelling skills and allowed them to form generalizations that could be applied to new words that were not explicitly taught. To support children's development in word recognition, teachers should include ample opportunities for them to practice using the analogy strategy until children can unconsciously use the strategy independently and for children to practice decoding and breaking apart multisyllabic words in syllables to develop syllable knowledge they can use while reading (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998).

As children shift to the automatic phase (Chall, 1983) from the consolidated-alphabetic phase of word recognition, children become proficient word readers. As proficient word readers, children have successfully developed and currently possess the necessary skills of automaticity and speed to recognize familiar and unfamiliar words. When reading, they read most words that are a part of their sight word vocabularies which allows them to read most words automatically, effortlessly, and accurately (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Lindsey, 2022). When children read on occasion and come across an unfamiliar word, they can access one of their word reading strategies, such as analogy, to read the unknown word. Therefore, theoretical and empirical literature suggest that young children must develop a solid foundation in PA considering the crucial role it plays in children's journey to becoming proficient readers. Additionally, the

research literature also suggests that children must develop alphabet knowledge to successfully move from the pre-alphabetic stage of word identification to the automatic phase. For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to ensure children develop a solid foundation in PA, review alphabet knowledge, and advance their developing decoding and encoding development during phonics instruction to advance through the stages of word identification.

Phonemic Awareness Instruction

For children to develop PA, the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) recommends that children engage in a total of 15 hours of instruction during a school year. Although the NRP (2000) has been critiqued for limiting their findings to quantitative studies (Shanahan, 2004) and not recognizing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities and lived experiences as contributors to their literacy development (Yatvin, 2002), in the research literature, they provide a time frame recommendation in relation to the context of the school day in which teachers are working within that includes constraints. These 15 hours of instruction can be dispersed across the 180 days of the school year into five minutes of daily instruction (Lindsey, 2022). When children engage in PAI, they typically engage in various oral language play activities such as listening to children's literature and creating variations, singing certain songs, and sorting pictures by sound (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force [MAISAGELNELTF], 2023; Opitz, 2000). Through these activities, teachers can support children in focusing their attention on sounds in oral language (Ayers, 1993; Griffith & Olson, 1992; Hoffman, 1997; Murray et al., 1996; Neuman, 1999; Yopp, 1992). These texts can draw children's attention to language features such as alliteration, phonemic substitution, and phonemic segmentation (Opitz, 2000).

Teachers may select children's literature such as *A Pair of Protoceratops* (Most, 1998) and nursery rhymes such as "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe," to name a few. Griffith and Olson (1992) note that sound-play texts, such as these, can "heighten a child's sensitivity to the phonological structure of language" (p. 521). After actively engaging in these texts, children can discover and attend to sounds in oral language as a result of listening to the linguistic stimulation authors include (Griffith & Olson, 1992). For example, when Özen Altınkaynak (2019) examined the impact of children's literature on young children's PAD, she found that children advanced their PAS more through interactive read-alouds compared to children who listened to traditional read-alouds. When French and Feng (1992) examined the impact of shared reading with nursery rhymes such as "Bye Baby Bunting" on young children who identified as White and Black PAD in identifying and matching beginning sounds, segmenting and blending, they found that children made significant academic gains in alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, reading and writing. After engaging with the children's literature, teachers can create variations of the texts with children's suggestions. By creating their own variation, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color can draw from their funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) to share words from their vocabulary that include some new phonemic features and some of the same phonemic features that parallel the language features in the children's literature. For example, children may share alternative onsets to the same rimes in words to create their version of "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to include an opportunity for children to create the text variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, where they can draw self-portraits with their favorite hairstyles and use a phrase to name the hairstyle with two words from their vocabularies

that begin with the same sound similar to the *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2021) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020) read-alouds incorporated in the unit.

Teachers may also sing certain songs throughout the school day to support children in PA by listening to sounds in words such as "Down by the Bay" and "Apples and Bananas." Through songs, children can learn many things about sounds in oral language (Opitz, 2000). Although many children's songs use rhyme, they can be used to support PAD by changing the beginning sounds to make new words and adding a beginning sound to make new words (Opitz, 2000). For example, "Down by the Bay" can support children in identifying and manipulating the beginning sounds in words and "Apples and Bananas" can support children in identifying and manipulating the medial sound in words. When teachers use these songs during instruction and direct children's attention to the individual sounds, songs can help children make a connection between manipulating sounds in words while singing to manipulate sounds in words while reading and writing (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to include a Hip Hop song so that children could listen to it throughout the unit to advance their PAS and support them in identifying the beginning sounds in words through oral language play and music.

Teachers may use various picture sorts to support PAD. Picture sorts allow children to pay close attention to sounds in a particular position in words such as the beginning, ending, and medial positions (Bear et al., 2000; Meier, 2008). While completing the sort, children listen and manipulate phonemes to determine if the name of the pictures has the same phoneme as one of the category examples in a closed picture sort. For example, children might sort a series of ten pictures into two categories: names of pictures that begin with /s/ as in sun or /m/ as in moon. While these activities support PAD, it is crucial for children to make direct connections between

their developing PA and their growing alphabet knowledge for children to make a direct connection between the two sets of FLS and to recognize their roles in actual reading and writing.

To better support children in developing alphabet knowledge or recognizing phoneme-grapheme correspondences, Ehri and colleagues (1984) recommend using picture mnemonics that include letter shapes and sounds. Through this pedagogical choice, children can better store phoneme-grapheme correspondences in their memory by seeing the letter, the shape of an object that resembles the letter's shape and the initial sound (Ehri, 2020). For example, when Shmidman and Ehri (2010) examined young children who identified as White, Black, and Asian experiences using picture mnemonics while in the pre-alphabetic stage of word identification, they found children mastered phoneme-grapheme correspondences with less support when provided instruction that included letters resembling the shape of the object in the picture compared to children who did not receive instruction using the same objects in the pictures. Although their findings suggest that children can further develop alphabet knowledge using shape-sound mnemonics (Shmidman & Ehri, 2010), I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to include people who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to represent most of the alphabet letter-sound relationships. This emphasizes the importance of affirming children's racial and cultural identities during FLI.

While the theoretical and empirical research literature recognize various literacy activities and pedagogical choices as beneficial to young children when they are building their fundamental understanding of PA and alphabet knowledge to scaffold their word recognition development, the research literature does not emphasize the importance of FLI to be fun, engaging (Opitz, 2000), joyful and culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Lindsey,

2022; NYSED, 2019). For these reasons, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to fill gaps in the literature to support children in advancing their understanding of PA and alphabet knowledge to scaffold their word recognition development while simultaneously engaging in literacy instruction that is enjoyable, culturally responsive, and meaningful.

Reimagining Phonemic Awareness Instruction

According to the existing research literature, FLI does not provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with culturally relevant educational opportunities and resources which is necessary in all aspects of curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; NYSED, 2019). For these reasons, I believe FLI must be improved by creating space for children to use their identities, including their home languages and lived experiences they entered the classroom with, as assets to build their fundamental understanding of PA and alphabet knowledge to scaffold their word recognition development. In order for children to experience FLI that is fun, engaging (Opitz, 2000), joyful, and culturally responsive (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Lindsey, 2022; Muhammad, 2023; NYSED, 2019), current FL curriculum must be deconstructed and reconstructed to better reflect children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023).

By reconstructing FL curriculum, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color will have the opportunity to engage in more equitable educational opportunities that celebrate and embrace historically marginalized communities of Color experiences, such as their culturally influenced lived and linguistic experiences, cultures such as Hip Hop, music such as rap, and art such as culturally diverse children's literature in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2021). With these inclusions, children will engage in instruction that better centers and reflects the experiences of historically marginalized communities of Color as opposed to "propaganda

designed to uncritically valorize the United States" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 74). Additionally, these inclusions consider children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color as more than students but as whole human beings (Muhammad, 2023). These inclusions also support children's social-emotional experiences which are specifically essential components to Black culture (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Love, 2015; Muhammad, 2023). My scholarship considers current research-based FL curriculum and the emphasis for it to be fun, engaging (Opitz, 2000), joyful, and culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Lindsey, 2022; Muhammad, 2023; NYSED, 2019) and examines children's experiences engaging in culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop PAI by contributing new insights to the field.

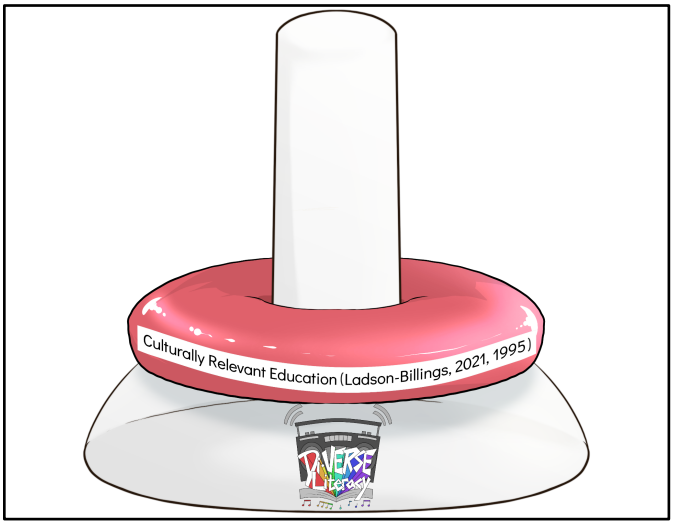
Culturally Relevant Education

When children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in culturally relevant education, they typically find their experiences in the classroom to be engaging, meaningful, relatable (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Laing & Villavicencio, 2016), and joyful (Muhammad, 2023). These experiences become meaningful, relatable, and joyful because children use the identities and lived experiences they enter the classroom with as valuable assets to access throughout their learning (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019) "in racially and culturally just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32), resulting in their academic success. Over 30 years ago, when Ladson-Billings (1995) began studying teachers who supported Black students' academic success in the classroom, she developed this framework to better support Black students in other classrooms across the country. Ladson-Billings (2009) argues that teachers who implement culturally relevant education with Black students can further students' academic growth compared to students in the same grade and school who do not engage in culturally relevant education at all.

Because of the success Black students experienced with culturally relevant education, other scholars used the framework to support students who were members of additional communities of Color who have been historically marginalized as well (Ball, 1995; Garcia, 1993; McCarty et al., 2006; Moll & González,1994; Lee, 1995; Valdes, 1996). I, too, use this framework to support Black children and children of Color from additional historically marginalized communities. Furthermore, I use culturally relevant education in this study because many teachers have varied understandings of this framework (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Souto-Manning et al., 2018), including some that are superficial and do not value children's identities and experiences in the classroom the way Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014, 2021) argues. Because of this varied understanding, many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience *culturally relevant education* from a distorted perspective (Ladson-Billings, 2021), furthering the outcome of the "culture and teaching gap" (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89). For these reasons, I use culturally relevant education as the foundational framework in this study while utilizing additional strength- and asset-based frameworks (Gay, 2000; Hill, 2009; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014) to inform the design of Di•VERSE Literacy (Figure 2) to provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with equitable educational opportunities, centering their true, full, and whole identities (Gay, 2023, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2021, 1995; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Figure 2

Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Design of Di•VERSE Literacy



I use the "largest ring" to represent culturally relevant education or the most influential framework informing the curriculum design. For young children to engage in culturally relevant PAI, the three tenets of culturally relevant education must be present during the teaching and learning exchange (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021).

Academic Success

Oftentimes, the teaching and learning exchange centers teachers' "values and norms of learning within classrooms and across schools" (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019, p. 5). When the teaching and learning exchange centers on teachers' values and norms, the focus of the provided instruction is on what the teacher covers in the curriculum and their progress with their school district's pacing guide (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2018) as well as teachers' values and norms that are culturally influenced (Carey et al., 2018; Milner, 2020). When curriculum and pacing guides are the center of instruction, the teaching and learning exchange focuses on teaching instead of focusing on learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Additionally, when the teaching and learning exchange focuses on teachers' values and norms

that are culturally influenced and different from children's values and norms that are culturally influenced, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience harm in the classroom that disregards their identities and lived experiences that are culturally influenced, impeding their academic success in school (Carey et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021). As a result, children from historically marginalized communities become "recipients of knowledge" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) rooted in their "teachers' values and norms" (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019, p. 5). For the teaching and learning exchange to center children's learning, children must be positioned as "creators and producers" of knowledge (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32).

When children are positioned as "creators and producers" of knowledge while engaging in culturally relevant educational experiences, their teachers focus on their depth of knowledge and mastery of the content provided during the teaching and learning exchange (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). In other words, teachers consider the academic achievement children enter the classroom with at the beginning of the school year and the academic growth children can make by the end of the school year to center instruction on children's learning (Ladson-Billings, 2021). For instance, when Ladson-Billings (2002) observed a small group of kindergarteners and first graders engaged in writing instruction, one Black child and three White children, she noticed the child who identified as Black disengaged in the writing instruction because she was tired of always writing about one of her White peer's lived experiences. Writing about her White peer's lived experiences placed her in the role as a "consumer and recipient of knowledge" which was not a meaningful, relatable, or joyful experience for her (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). However, if she were positioned as a "creator and producer" of knowledge (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32), she would have had the opportunity to draw from her funds of

knowledge and use one of her lived experiences that was culturally influenced "as…[a] scaffold for new learning" (Amanti, 2005, p. 135) to advance her depth of knowledge and mastery of the content covered during the writing lesson through a meaningful, relatable, and joyful experience that did not erase her "cultural style [and] form of language" (Ladson-Billings, 2002, p. 110).

In this study, children engaged in various PA activities through Di•VERSE Literacy that allowed them to create and produce knowledge (Souto-Manning et al., 2018) while drawing on their funds of knowledge (Moll & González,1994) as valuable assets to access throughout their learning (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019) to build a solid foundation in their literacy development. During the teaching and learning exchange and intervention, children had numerous opportunities to draw from their lived experiences and linguistic repertoires to orally manipulate words in their home language (Baker-Bell, 2020; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022) while making a direct connection between oral language and explicitly reading and writing print as "creators and producers" of knowledge (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32).

Cultural Competence

When children have the opportunity to draw from their funds of knowledge they entered the classroom with to advance their academic success in school, they also have the opportunity to develop their cultural competence further. Cultural competence refers to children's knowledge and understanding of their culture and at least one other culture (Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021). In other words, children have a deep understanding of their culture, including their language, traditions, histories, and experiences that are culturally influenced, as well as having an understanding of another culture, including their language, traditions, histories, and experiences that are culturally influenced. With this knowledge and understanding, children can communicate and interact with others from culturally diverse

backgrounds with whom they share the multicultural world (Bishop, 1990; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Additionally, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color will recognize that their identities and lived experiences belong in the classroom instead of believing they must take on a separate identity that erases the foundation of their being (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). When teachers deeply understand children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities and lived experiences, they can use children's "cultures as a vehicle for learning" to further advance their academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 161). When teachers promote cultural competence in the classroom, they recognize that their pedagogies "must work back and forth between the lives of…[children] and the life of school" (Ladson-Billings, 2006b, p. 32).

In order to work back and forth between children's lives and the life of school, teachers must recenter the focus of curriculum to be inclusive of historically marginalized communities of Color including their histories, cultures, music, and art forms (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). By recentering curriculum or giving curriculum a "hard re-set," children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color can learn about their cultures in more genuine and just ways (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 73). They will also be able to make connections between their funds of knowledge as well as their families' and communities' funds of knowledge while in the classroom to advance their academic success. For example, when Stuart and Volk (2002) examined the impact of culturally diverse children's literature with culturally relatable characters and themes on emergent bilingual first and second graders who identified as Brown and Black literacy engagement, they found children's engagement in reading increased when the texts centered children's lived experiences as opposed to the texts centering the experiences belonging to the White dominant group of society. When

Bell and Clark (1998) examined first through fourth graders who identified as Black comprehension development, they found children advanced their comprehension when they also engaged in culturally diverse children's literature that included Black imagery and culturally relatable themes as opposed to texts that included White imagery and culturally unrelatable themes. Based on their findings, children who identify as Black and Brown enjoy literacy experiences that are culturally relatable, meaningful, and affirming.

In this study, children engaged in various PA activities through Di•VERSE Literacy that centered culturally diverse children's literature that included Black and Brown characters and culturally relatable themes, including various experiences from the Black and Latine communities to lay a meaningful, relatable, and joyful foundation of the targeted instruction. By engaging in various texts that represent historically marginalized communities in more genuine and just ways, children had the opportunity to recognize similarities and differences between their experiences and the experiences of their peers. Additionally, they had space to recognize that their rich cultures, and the cultures of their peers, belong in the classroom. In order to be inclusive of historically marginalized communities and to share power with children's families and communities (Emdin, 2016; Freire, 1998; Morrison et al., 2008), a few families who self-identified as Black informally provided feedback on Di•VERSE Literacy prior to implementation to better include families and communities of Color perspectives in children's academic success and in giving current literacy curriculum a hard re-set. By including families and communities' perspectives in instruction, teachers can recognize how children, their families, and communities are groups "from whom they can learn" (Ladson-Billings, 2012, p. X).

Critical Consciousness

When teachers share power in the classroom with children, their families, and communities, they can help children recognize the connection between their academic success and the everyday problems of society "that is deeply divided along racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, environmental, social, political, and cultural lines" (Ladson-Billings, 2012, p. X). Critical consciousness supports children in recognizing social inequities and injustices within society instead of children believing in meritocracy and that they are the "problem" hindering their academic success in school (Anderson, 2017, p. 1). To support children's critical consciousness, Morrison and colleagues (2008) name four practices that must be implemented in the classroom: (1) critical literacy; (2) children's engagement in social justice work; (3) explicit recognition of power dynamics in society; and (4) sharing power in the classroom.

When teachers utilize critical literacy (1), they select text with various points of view and perspectives to engage children in critical conversations about inequities and injustices in school and society (Souto-Manning et al., 2018). When teachers engage children in social justice work (2), they create learning opportunities that allow children to recognize inequities and injustices to rethink and reshape their experiences and perspectives (Bishop, 1990; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). When teachers make the power dynamics of society explicit to children (3), they help children recognize the culture of power while valuing children's rich linguistic repertoires in the classroom as they prepare them to participate "in the dominant culture of power" in society (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 44). When teachers share power in the classroom with children (4), they integrate the traditional teacher and student roles (Freire, 1998) to engage children in reconstructing curriculum **(**Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). By including these four practices in their teaching, teachers reconstruct curriculum to center

sociopolitical issues “front and center in their classrooms” (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 45). For example, when Souto-Manning (2009) implemented the four practices in a first grade classroom and selected multiple perspectives of the same story to support children from various racial and ethnic backgrounds in making connections between their lived experiences and issues of diversity and access, she found children were able to reshape their views and value a range of perspectives. When Parsons (2005) observed a White teacher implement the same practices in a classroom where White students silenced Black students through patterns of talk, the teacher disrupted patterns of linguistic injustices by creating space for Black students to engage in equitable experiences similar to their White peers. Based on the study's findings, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to incorporate (1) critical literacy; (2) engagement in social justice work; (3) explicit recognition of power dynamics in society; and (4) sharing power in the classroom to disrupt patterns of linguistic injustices so that children could reshape their views and value additional perspectives.

In this study, the four practices of critical consciousness were implemented in the Di•VERSE Literacy intervention to further children’s critical consciousness while simultaneously advancing their academic success in PA. Critical literacy was utilized through the selection of culturally diverse children’s literature written and illustrated by authors and illustrators who self-identify as Black and Brown. In the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, children engaged with a series of texts on the same experience “to reorganize [instruction] around concepts that better reflect the experiences of African Americans” and additional historically marginalized communities, including hip Black and Brown hairstyles (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 73). By including children’s literature written by various authors on the same topics, children had space during instruction to engage in critical conversations about the

inequities and injustices that impact these experiences, particularly meaningful and relatable experiences to children from historically marginalized communities. These critical conversations emerged from children's emotional concerns in response to the injustices they encounter throughout their lives as young members of society. Children had opportunities to engage in social justice work during the read-alouds and PA activities to reshape how they think and view their experiences and perspectives (Muhammad, 2023). During the lessons, children could recognize inequities and injustices in school and society that previously prevented them from accessing their lived experiences and home languages as assets to further their academic success in the classroom (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Additionally, children explicitly recognized the power dynamics of society and the dominant culture of power while having space during instruction to use their rich linguistic repertoires (Flores, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2016) in the classroom as they prepare to participate "in the dominant culture of power" (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 44) in life and society. Di•VERSE Literacy created space for children to develop FLS through their home languages in the classroom (Flores, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2016) while also supporting children in understanding the meaning of White Mainstream English in similar contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2021) considering many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color participate "in the dominant culture of power" through texts and conversations with teachers throughout their schooling (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 44). While the goal of Di•VERSE Literacy is not for children to assimilate into White ways of existing in the world, the goal of the reconstructed curriculum is for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have space during literacy instruction to use their identities, home languages, and experiences as assets to advance their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills in "culturally and

racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). Another goal of Di•VERSE Literacy is for children to continue expanding their linguistic repertoires by being able to recognize similarities and differences between their home languages and many of their teachers' home language, White Mainstream English, for children to make meaning of their language experiences during the teaching and learning exchange through their listening and speaking skills in response to research literature.

Culturally and Historically Responsive Education

When children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color reconstruct curriculum by creating space in the classroom to draw from their identities and lived experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), they engage in curriculum that is "responsive to the histories, identities, literacies, and liberation of children and the social world" (Muhammad, 2023, p. 14). By reconstructing curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), children make choices that protect them from the harm they typically experience with traditional curriculum in school and choices that honor and embrace their identities and experiences, providing them with a sense of belonging (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Adding to culturally relevant and responsive education frameworks (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995), Muhammad (2023) notes that reconstructing curriculum requires us to return to past pursuits that have been "forgotten, hidden, or erased" and to (re)member "the historical brilliance of the past" to reshape children's education in classrooms today (p.14).

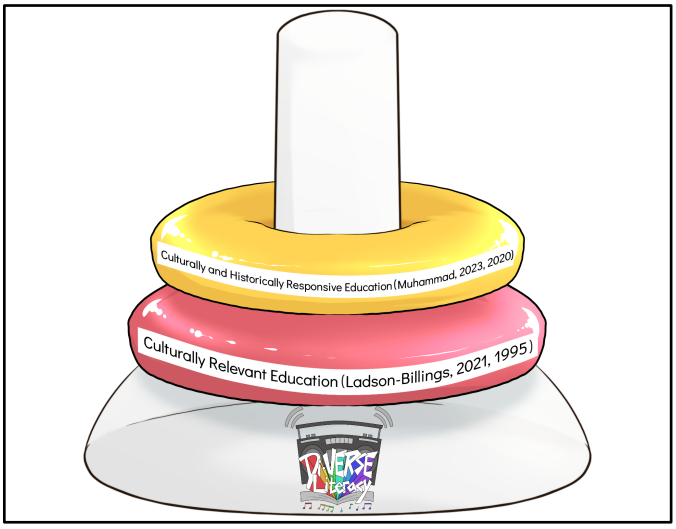
One way children can reshape education today is through (re)membering (Dillard, 2022) the accomplishments, individuals, and "ancestral genius" (Muhammad, 2023, p. 14) of communities of Color who have been historically marginalized and missing from the dominant curriculum (Au et al., 2016; Bishop, 1990). By (re)membering ancestral genius to reconstruct

curriculum, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color will remember *who* and *whose* they are while in the classroom as they advance their academic success and simultaneously support their social-emotional intelligence and mental health (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020). For reconstructed curriculum to support children as whole human beings (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), education must move beyond instruction that only focuses on skills that are "rooted in Whiteness," meaningless and unrelatable to children from historically marginalized communities identities and lived experiences (Muhammad, 2020, 2023).

While one of the goals of Di•VERSE Literacy is for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to advance their academic success in PA, a FL skill, Di•VERSE Literacy intended to provide children with instruction that moved beyond isolated skills development. Instead, Di•VERSE Literacy incorporated the five pursuits Muhammad (2023) names as part of the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model as an instructional framework for culturally and historically responsive education (Figure 3), an extension of culturally relevant and responsive education (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Considering culturally and historically responsive education is an extension of culturally relevant and responsive education, I use the second "largest ring" to represent culturally and historically responsive education or the second influential framework informing the curriculum design.

Figure 3

Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Design of Di•VERSE Literacy



Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model

As part of the culturally and historically responsive education framework, Muhammad (2020, 2023) incorporates the five pursuits of the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model. The five pursuits, a word from African American ancestors to name their intentional practices to elevate their community, include identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy (Muhammad, 2020, 2023).

The Pursuit of Identity

Identity development supports children in understanding who they are and who others are with whom they share the world (Bishop, 1990; Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). It is crucial for young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have space in the classroom to make meaning of their identities in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) because many outlets in society including children's literature (Bishop, 1990), the media, and social media portrays their identities in deficit ways (Muhammad,

2020). Researchers (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2015; Muhammad, 2023; Noguera, 2003; Paris & Alim, 2014) found students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are more likely to succeed when they see themselves including their identities represented positively and genuinely in curriculum. Additionally, when students see their peers' diverse identities represented positively and genuinely in curriculum, they develop respect for diverse communities who experience the world differently than they do (Bishop, 1990; Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). While sociocultural and critical scholars recognize and value identity as an essential component of literacy development, the CCSS (2021) or MK-12SELA (2021) do not consider the impact of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities on their learning and their understanding of the world (Muhammad, 2020). However, children must see themselves represented positively and genuinely in the classroom before they begin advancing their academic success in FLS such as PA and decoding (Muhammad, 2020; Souto-Manning et al, 2022).

For these reasons, Di•VERSE Literacy began with a read-aloud of *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), two texts that recognize Black and Brown characters as *kings* and *queens* (Beyoncé, 2020; Nas, 2002) to remind children *who* and *whose* they are (Muhammad, 2023) while in the classroom and disturbing the gap between the history children who self-identify as Black learn at school and the history they learn from their families and communities about their ancestors at home (Almara, 2001; Dimitriadis, 2000; Epstein, 1998, 2009; Patterson & Shuttleworth, 2019; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). While many Black children are familiar with being called *king* or *queen* by their families and community members at home (Beyoncé, 2020; Nas, 2002), they typically do not engage in instruction at

school that recognizes the Black community's ancestral ties to the kingdoms of Africa (Beyoncé, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Nas, 2002). To remind children of their ties to the kingdoms of "Ghana, Mali, and Songhai" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 73), Di•VERSE Literacy requires teachers to recognize and refer to children as *kings* and *queens* during the first lesson. The reconstructed curriculum also includes a crown template, similar to Hip Hop's artist Basquiat's (1984), for children to add to their self-affirming writing and self-portrait products throughout the intervention to continuously remind them that "[they] matter" (Robinson, 2020, p. 6) in the world and belong in the classroom (Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

The Pursuit of Skills

The second pursuit is skills. Skills development supports children in developing competence in content areas considered necessary by curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals and promoted by states (CCSS, 2021; Muhammad, 2020). In turn, the skills recognized in the CCSS (2021) lay the foundation for curriculum design and instruction for schools implementing these standards, such as Michigan. While traditional literacy curriculum and pedagogies center on skills development (Gee, 2001), children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color must develop these skills in culturally and historically responsive and meaningful ways (Wise & Ward, 2022). Historically, ancestors of the Black community considered writing development a crucial skill to have because the process of writing allowed them to read texts, think about the content, and generate new ideas to communicate through print with their intended audiences (Muhammad, 2020). As they developed their writing skills, they had more access to content across the areas, providing them "access and tools for education" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 84).

To provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color "access and tools for education," Di•VERSE Literacy considered children's identities and lived experiences while supporting them in making an explicit connection between PA and beginning reading and writing (Muhammad, 2020, p. 84). At the end of the first unit, after children received explicit instruction and numerous opportunities to practice the targeted PA skill in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018), children made a direct connection between the skill they were developing and writing for authentic purposes with prompting and support (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Strech, 1994). Like Rowe's (2020, 2021) *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair,* children created their text variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Hair Happy*, incorporating their self-portraits with phrases to name the styles in their home languages utilizing alliteration (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023). Then, children read their text aloud during phonics instruction to support their PAD as they reconstructed literacy curriculum. They also kept their text or class book in their classroom library, making themselves, their communities and families, their audiences for authentic purposes.

The Pursuit of Intellect

The third pursuit is intellect. Intellect development supports children in gaining new understandings that are connected to the world, including immediate and global contexts, where they can apply those skills and standards that were taught (Muhmmad, 2020, 2023). Intellect entails the content and experiences children should become more knowledgeable about, such as equity and justice, to apply that knowledge in real-world settings "to experience joy and critique the problems of the world" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 100). When teachers support children's developing intellect during the teaching and learning exchange, they prepare children to read words and to read the world (Freire, 2005). However, classroom curriculum is not always

updated to reflect the present events in the world affecting human conditions as well as the historical connections of those present events to advance children's intellectualism (Muhammad, 2020). Intellectualism is essential to communities of Color who have been historically marginalized, considering their intellect was stripped from them by members of the dominant group of society historically and today (Muhmmad, 2020). Therefore, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color should engage in instruction that allows them to expand their knowledge in their minds while also having space to do something with that newly developed knowledge by putting it to action (Muhammad, 2020). One way Black ancestors advanced their knowledge on critical content and experiences impacting their communities locally and globally was through the study of books and the histories of the world (Muhammad, 2020).

To support children's intellectualism like Black ancestors, unit one of Di•VERSE Literacy incorporated four culturally diverse children's books that centered Black and Brown identities through hair. These texts were selected to support children in advancing their understanding of their identities to continue making meaning of their lived experiences and the experiences of their communities in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) while also developing FLS in the classroom. Through these texts, children furthered their understanding of the history and traditions of Black pride and culture, and many trailblazers who contributed to this beautiful, evolving art form that describes the experiences of Black and Brown people living in historically marginalized urban intensive communities (Dyson, 2023; Milner, 2012; Sawyer, 2023). After engaging in various PA activities with connections to the four texts, such as orally manipulating and identifying the beginning sound in the names of some of the trailblazers in Black Language and White Mainstream English, children reflected on their

hair experiences by creating self-portraits with their favorite hairstyle while writing the name of it in their home languages to share with others, putting their furthered understanding into action (Muhammad, 2020). Through these experiences, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color recognized another aspect of their identities and experiences that were culturally and racially influenced as belonging in the classroom during the teaching and learning exchange.

The Pursuit of Criticality

The fourth pursuit is criticality. Criticality development, when first grounded in children's identities, supports children in recognizing, naming, understanding, and disrupting oppression in the world and within themselves to make the world more just (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). In other words, criticality helps children reflect on historically marginalized communities' experiences in relation to society's structures (Ladson-Billings, 2012; Muhmmad, 2018). When teachers include criticality during the teaching and learning exchange, teachers engage children in instruction that helps them recognize and name inequities and injustices while also providing children with learning opportunities that are humanizing and compassionate (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhmmad, 2020). Considering schools systematically strip children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color of their "identities, histories, joy, and civil rights," criticality can provide children with the tools they need to respond to those injustices they encounter in school and the world (Muhammad, 2020, p. 119). They can also use those tools to protect themselves from harm (Ginwright & James, 2002). Like culturally relevant education, specifically critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2021, 1995), criticality does not recognize hierarchies in the teaching and learning exchange (Muhammad, 2020). Instead, criticality can contribute to a classroom community that weaves the role of teacher and student together (Freire, 1998) and celebrates and honors children's identities and lived experiences (Muhammad, 2020).

Similar to Morrison and colleagues (2008) in naming critical literacy aa a practice of critical consciousness, Muhammad (2020) names critical literacy as a component of criticality. Critical literacy creates space during instruction for children to engage in critical conversations about inequities and injustices through reading texts that include various viewpoints and perspectives (Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Critical literacy also supports children in gaining print authority, which is defined as a deep understanding of a topic they critiqued and can offer their perspectives on that topic (Muhammad, 2020).

Grounded in children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities and experiences, Di•VERSE Literacy supported their criticality by positioning children as co-authors of their class text variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, after they engaged in the four culturally diverse children's texts on the same topic. Through collaboration as a classroom community, children (re)cognized and (re)membered the beauty of their heritage and power that others cannot take from them. Considering schools systematically strip children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color of their "identities, histories, [and] joy," these texts supported children in developing the tools they needed to take on the injustices they encounter in school and the world (Muhammad, 2020, p. 119). For example, children from historically marginalized communities learn at an early age that their home languages do not belong in the classroom. Ramos (2022) utilized Spanish and Black Language in humanizing and compassionate ways to compose the text to support children in (re)cognizing and understanding what "it means to be Black and Brown in the world" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 122) through rhythmic and rhyming verses in one of the texts. By including this text in the classroom during FLI, children protected themselves from harm (Ginwright & James, 2002) by having space in the classroom that centered their identities, languages, and experiences of being members of

communities of Color. Additionally, the inclusion of the texts advanced children's print authority by allowing them to critique the texts and provide their views and perspectives on their hair identities and experiences (Milner, 2012; 2020) as they advance their PAS.

The Pursuit of Joy

The fifth pursuit is joy. The development of joy supports children in practicing self-love and love for humanity, (re)cognizing the truths, histories, arts, beauty, and aesthetics of historically marginalized communities' cultures, and working towards solving social issues in the world (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2019; Muhmmad, 2023). In other words, joy advances children's happiness by including truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in the classroom (Adichie, 2009). It allows children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to see their darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019). Historically, ancestors of the Black community embraced joy through celebrations of life, using their languages and literacies, advancing their academic growth in content areas, and creating music and art before and after they strived for liberation (Hannah-Jones, 2021). Joy allowed them to regain their identities as People of Color (Love, 2019), made them feel whole, relieved them from oppression, and gave them a purpose for being in the world (Muhammad, 2023). Joy can do the same for children in schools. By blending critical consciousness and criticality with joy in the classroom, children from historically marginalized communities can avoid experiencing the hurt and harm they typically experience in schools (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Love, 2019; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). When teachers include truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color during the teaching and learning exchange, teachers engage children in instruction that allows them to "see themselves fully and joy can

enter their lives" (Muhammad, 2023, p. 71) as they see themselves in the past, present, and future (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Love, 2015; Muhammad, 2020).

Children saw themselves fully in the past, present, and future when they engaged in FLI using Di•VERSE Literacy. I designed the first unit to provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with a stronger literacy curriculum that centered the histories, experiences, priorities, and values of historically marginalized communities of Color (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2019; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). Through Di•VERSE Literacy, children had space to practice self-love, love for humanity, (re)cognize the truths, histories, arts, beauty, and aesthetics of historically marginalized communities of Color cultures, and work towards solving social issues in their classroom as they advance their academic success in PAS (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Love, 2019; Muhmmad, 2023). The first unit centered experiences culturally relatable to children through culturally diverse children's literature written by communities of Color. Through the authors of Color cultural styles and languages (Ladson-Billings, 1994), children (re)cognized their identities as truthful representations where joy entered their lives in the classroom. By using the authors' cultural languages during the teaching and learning exchange, children developed PAS while disrupting social injustices in the classroom that typically marginalized their home languages (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2019; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris, 2012).

Following the steps of Black ancestors (Hannah-Jones, 2021; Love, 2019; Muhammad, 2023), these experiences helped children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color feel true, whole, and free from linguistic oppression in the classroom as they develop PAS. By including the five pursuits in the teaching and learning exchange, teachers can better support

children in experiencing wellness and justice during instruction. Using culturally relevant education as the foundation of this study, I added the five pursuits Muhammad (2023) names as part of the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model as an instructional framework for culturally and historically responsive education to support children in seeing communities of Color brilliant histories to recognize their humanity. Specifically, I use culturally and historically responsive education to fill gaps in the research literature to highlight the necessity for FL education to center identity, criticality, and historical knowledge through my design of Di•VERSE Literacy.

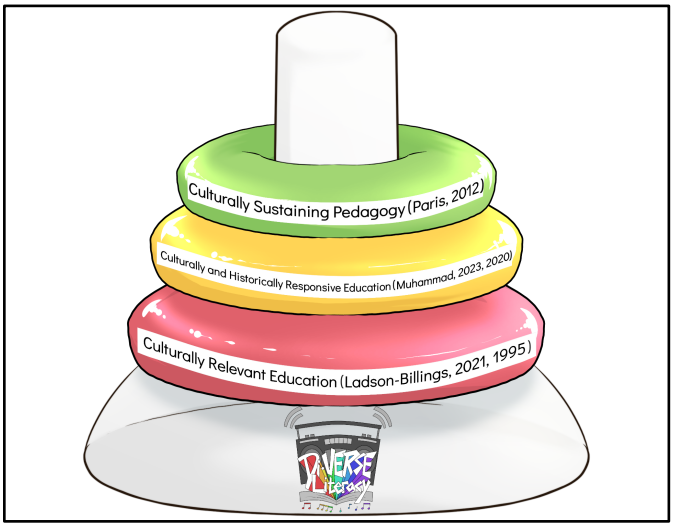
Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

While culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally and historically responsive education recognizes children's racial and or ethnic identities as assets to advance their academic growth in the classroom (Gay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), Paris and Alim (2014) recognize that students who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter the classroom with additional cultural identities that shape their ways of being in the world. In agreement with Paris and Alim, Ladson-Billings (2014) states that culturally relevant education must be "remixed" to support this century's students better. Extending the parameters of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 2014), Paris (2012) defines culturally sustaining pedagogy as a framework that "seeks to perpetuate and foster–to sustain–linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 93). In other words, culturally sustaining pedagogy incorporates the "multiplicities of identities and cultures that formulate today's youth" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). Instead of solely focusing on today's youth's racial and or ethnic identities, the focus on identity shifts to a focus on cultural hybridity (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Love, 2015). As a framework, culturally sustaining pedagogy (Figure 4)

centers on cultural hybridity (Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014), which is a fundamental aspect of urban life (Love, 2015). Considering culturally sustaining pedagogy centers cultural hybridity, I use the third "largest ring" to represent culturally sustaining pedagogy or the third influential framework informing the curriculum design.

Figure 4

Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Design of Di•VERSE Literacy



Hip-Hop-Based-Education

One of the many identities and cultures today's urban youth cultural hybridity encompasses is Hip Hop. Hip Hop is a beautiful art form combined with urban life (Dyson, 2021; Spellman, 2021; Xzibit, 2021), providing a voice to the voiceless in the streets of urban communities (Antney, 2021; Dixon, 2009; Dr. Dre, 2021; Fat Joe, 2023; Travis, 2013). Hip Hop is more than music. It is a culture and a lifestyle that influences how people walk, talk, and dress (Dr. Dre, 2023; Petchauer, 2009). Hip Hop culture is a "network of generations tied together by ethnic origin, spiritual orientations, geographic tendencies, kinship norms, and several other community oriented practices including artistic expression, communal traditions, philosophies, social values, and imposed social orders" (Wilson, 2007, p. 6). This beautiful art form is a part of

the larger American culture that is a reflection of the past with ties to the present that centers Caribbean and African (American) diasporic traditions (Hill, 2009; Love, 2015; Petchauer, 2009; Sawyer, 2023; Wilson, 2007). Because Hip Hop does not exist in isolation (Sawyer, 2023), it became an outlet that allowed communities of Color who have been historically marginalized to be honest about the realities of systemic issues in (the United States of) America impacting their experiences, such as race, class, and gender (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Markman, 2021).

When rappers spit bars over dope beats, they are describing the experiences in their everyday lives growing up as People of Color who faced countless inequities and injustices (Markman, 2021). Hip Hop provides them hope and possibilities of liberation and a future at a time when unemployment, addiction, and under-resources decimated their communities (Dyson, 2023; Ice T, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Miller, 2023; Pegues, 2021). While Hip Hop is heavily criticized for being violent by members of the White dominant group of American society, Hip Hop artists use their voices to describe the violence they saw their families and communities experience as a result of those societal inequities and injustices (Markman, 2023). Hip Hop created space for People of Color from historically marginalized communities to emotionally explain why they had the feelings they had from experiencing those systemic issues in American society (Jordan, 2021) that continue to persist today. Because of these systemic issues, Hip Hop was also designed as a means to an end to enact social changes that would allow People of Color into spaces that have been historically unavailable in order to improve the conditions in their communities (Au et al., 2016; Rodriguez, 2021).

Since its birth out of the urban struggle in the streets of Brooklyn (Dean, 2021; Hill, 2009; Spellman, 2021), Hip Hop has continuously evolved over the past 50 years through four main elements, including rap music, graffiti, breakdancing and discjoking (Chang, 2006;

Petchauer, 2009; Weatherford, 2019). Over time, the elements expanded to include street theater, urban fashion, aesthetics, language, and activism (Chang, 2006; Dyson, 2023; Hill, 2009; Kelly, 2019; Love, 2015; Weatherford, 2019). Through these elements that center "the rich and innovative culture practices of communities of Color" (Love, 2015, p. 115), youth who identified as Black and Brown connected with other youth living in historically marginalized communities across the country with similar experiences by having their stories told and voices heard through Hip Hop artists' songs (Royce da 5' 9,'' 2021; Spellman, 2021; will.i.am, 2023). In turn, Hip Hop became the language of Black and Brown youth for Black and Brown youth (Chang, 2005; Fat Joe, 2023; Rose, 1994). Hip Hop became their education (Bilal, 2023; Jackson, 2023).

When the elements of Hip Hop culture influence students' lives and inform their education in and out of the classroom (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020), Hill (2009) defines the study of these experiences as Hip-Hop-Based-Education. Since the mid-1990s, many scholars began studying Hip-Hop-Based-Education in various disciplines (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Hill & Petchauer, 2013), including Black studies (Smitherman, 1997), cultural studies (McLaren, 1997), women's studies (Pough, 2004), spirituality (Pinn, 2003; Sorett, 2009), and education (Kelly, 2013; Petchauer, 2007, 2009). In the education field, Petchauer (2009) found Hip Hop to have three influential impacts in the classroom. First, many teachers integrate rap music and lyrics during English Language Arts instruction to provide students of Color from historically marginalized communities with culturally responsive and sustaining education to empower students and advance their academic success in school (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Kelly, 2013, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2014; Petchauer, 2009). Second, Hip Hop (culture) is much more than rap music (Dr. Dre, 2021; Love, 2015; Petchauer, 2009). Although rap music is one of the four pillars of Hip Hop (Weatherford, 2019), the Hip Hop practices and messages that

are integrated into rap music allow youth to develop their identities in meaningful ways while also making meaning of the world around them (Chang, 2006; Dimitriadis, 2001; Ginwright, 2004; Petchauer, 2009, 2007). In this context, rap music functions as cultural capital (Clay, 2003; Dimitriadis, 2001) or space for Black and Brown students to develop their racial and generational identities (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Hill, 2009; Ibrahim, 2004). While Hip Hop was created by and for Black and Brown youth, culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) moves the notion that Hip Hop is solely reserved for Black and Brown students but for students with additional identities, including some youth who identify as People of Color to experience cultural capital as they develop their multiplicities of identities and cultures as well (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Iwamoto et al., 2007; Kelly, 2019; Kitwana, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014; Petchauer, 2009). Third, many higher education institutions are rigorously integrating Hip Hop into courses, research, and other academic outlets (Petchauer, 2009; Walker, 2006). While many institutions offer these courses and some offer multiple, the education field would benefit from including Hip-Hop-Based-Education in teacher preparation programs (Love, 2015) to better support future teachers in supporting this century's students in embracing their true, full, and whole identities in the classroom.

Advantages of Hip-Hop-Based-Education

Through Hip-Hop-Based-Education's three influential impacts in the classroom, scholars found that when students, specifically students of Color from historically marginalized communities, engage in Hip-Hop-Based-Education, their experiences are enhanced, especially their experiences with school curriculum (Alim, 2009; Alim & Paris, 2017; Dixson et al., 2009; Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Kelly, 2013; Love, 2015; Marciano et al., 2020; Petchauer, 2009; Travis, 2013). Through Hip-Hop-Based-Education, students develop

critical literacy (Kelly, 2013; Morrell, 2004) and advance their academic success in the classroom (Love, 2015; Petchauer, 2009). Additionally, students (re)negotiate their identities and improve their empowerment and cultural responsiveness through critical reflection (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Kelly, 2013; Love, 2015; Marciano et al., 2020; Morrell, 2004; Morrison et al., 2008; Muhammad, 2020; Petchauer, 2009). Based on the scholars' findings, Hip-Hop-Based-Education provides students who identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with numerous opportunities to confirm their identities and humanity in the classroom while simultaneously advancing their academic success.

Hip-Hop-Based Education Inside the Classroom. When Kelly (2019) utilized the elements of Hip Hop with Black and White students to confirm their identities and humanity in a suburban high school elective course, Hip Hop Literature and Culture, she used a variety of Hip Hop artifacts, including songs, lyrics, and films, as well as created space in the curriculum for students to include Hip Hop artifacts of their choice as suggested by Hill (2009). By including some artifacts selected by students and the teacher in the curriculum, teachers share power with students (Freire, 1998), and students can study popular culture that impacts their everyday lives (Hill, 2009; Morrell, 2002). Through meaningful discussions that became personal while examining the Hip Hop artifacts, students (re)shaped their Hip Hop identities by embracing their different understandings and used them as opportunities for learning and sharing (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as opposed to engaging in unrelatable discussions in traditional English Language Arts classrooms (Hill, 2009; Kelly, 2019). By creating a critical Hip Hop classroom community that recognized the fluidity of Hip Hop culture, Kelly (2019) found critical literacy to support students in making direct connections between the content and their social and cultural experiences as they (re)developed their multilayered identities in the classroom.

Hip-Hop-Based Education Outside the Classroom. While Kelly (2019) examined students' experiences with Hip-Hop-Based-Education in the classroom, Marciano and colleagues (2020), examined the elements of Hip Hop culture's influence on students' lives outside of the classroom. When Marciano and colleagues (2020) used Hip-Hop-Based-Education with Black high school students, they used the elements of Hip Hop to confirm students' college-going identities and humanity. Instead of using traditional English Language Arts practices to support students' college-going identities and readiness, Marciano and colleagues (2020) utilized the elements of Hip Hop to support Black students' college readiness in a community engaged organization in an urban intensive community. By utilizing students' multiplicities of identities and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014), specifically their Hip Hop culture and identities, students further developed their critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) by recognizing and understanding the barriers designed by society that makes college access challenging for communities of Color who have been historically marginalized, including societal deficit-oriented perspectives of youth of Color, their experiences in school, and the location of their communities in urban cities (Marciano et al., 2020; Richards et al., 2023). Through one of the workshops that examined Hip Hop album covers related to college and students' designing their own Hip Hop artifacts (Hill, 2009), Marciano and colleagues (2020) found students (re)negotiated their college-going identities through their literacy practices with each other as they created various multimodal artifacts based on their multilayered identities and experiences. The findings suggest that Hip-Hop-Based-Education inside and outside of the classroom can provide Black students with a truer and fuller understanding of the multiplicities of their identities and cultures while experiencing cultural capital as they continue to advance academically as learners.

Hip-Hop-Based-Education Historically Missing in Early Elementary

While researchers found several advantages to incorporating Hip Hop culture in and out of the classroom for students in upper elementary and beyond, Hip-Hop-Based-Education has been missing historically in early elementary or primary grade classrooms for younger learners (Irby & Hall, 2011; Love, 2015). It is missing in practice and there is a lack of theoretical research on the effectiveness and appropriateness of Hip-Hop-Based-Education for young learners as well (Irby & Hall, 2011). According to the existing literature, there are two main reasons why it is missing in primary grade classrooms. One of the reasons why Hip-Hop-Based-Education has been historically missing is because many teachers associate the culture of Hip Hop with mature, sexually explicit, and misogynistic lyrics in gangsta rap (Dixon et al., 2009; Love, 2015; Petchauer, 2009). By solely viewing Hip Hop culture as one subcategory of its four pillars, teachers further marginalize children's funds of knowledge, Hip Hop identities, and cultural practices that they bring inside the classroom (Love, 2015; Moll & González,1994; Paris & Alim, 2014). At the same time, teachers deny children space in the classroom for their true, full, and whole selves, which is essential to all strength and asset-based frameworks (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). While young children should not engage in this particular element of Hip Hop for these reasons, teachers can incorporate other elements of Hip Hop that children bring into the classroom to support their academic growth through culturally affirming ways.

Another reason Hip-Hop-Based-Education is missing in primary grade classrooms is because many teachers are not knowledgeable on integrating it into instruction to support children in beneficial ways (Love, 2015). While the inclusion of Hip-Hop-Based-Education in primary grade classrooms has been to support children in memorizing math concepts such as

equations or grammar rules such as punctuation, it has not been used in beneficial ways with ties to children's actual Hip Hop identities and culture (Love, 2015). Even though there is a Hip Hop disparity existing between children's and teachers' cultural experiences, teachers who are Hip Hop outsiders are recognizing the value of Hip Hop in children's lives and in the classroom.

Because of the power Hip-Hop-Based-Education has in supporting students in upper elementary and beyond, some teachers no longer need to be convinced of why they should incorporate it in instruction; they need to be shown how (Hill, 2009; Kelly, 2019; Love, 2015; Petchauer, 2009). They need to be shown how because many teachers may not be comfortable enough with Hip Hop culture to include it in their practices (Love, 2015). When Irby and Hall (2011) conducted workshops that supported teachers in including Hip-Hop-Based-Education in their practices effectively, they found teachers who were Hip Hop outsiders wanted to increase their awareness about Hip Hop's historical and social development to improve their implementation. Because of this gap in the existing literature, Di•VERSE Literacy aimed to fill the gap by creating space during PAI for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to access and utilize their multiplicities of identities and cultures (Kelly, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014), including Hip Hop which some children begin developing at birth with ties to their families and communities (Love, 2015).

Early Elementary Children's Hip Hop Experiences

When young children enter the classroom, they enter with Hip Hop experiences connected to their "[families'] and communities' music, language, and cultural pastimes" that are deeply influenced by their own Hip Hop identities as the first, second, and third wave of Hip Hop generations (Love, 2015, p. 108). Through children's social interactions with their families and communities that are influenced by Hip Hop culture, children begin developing their Hip

Hop identities from birth, shaping their multiplicities of identities and cultures, cognitive abilities, and collective learning experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014; Wilson, 2007). When collective learning experiences are situated in social interactions, Lave and Wenger (1991) consider them as communities of practice or knowledge-based social structures where individuals share a common interest. In Hip Hop communities of practice (Wilson, 2007), children develop cognitive skills by being and engaging in close proximity to Hip Hop insiders, their families, and communities (Love, 2015). These habits of body and mind children develop through the influence of Hip Hop (Petchauer, 2012) contribute to their "language-shifting abilities, kinesthetic brilliance, creativity, focused play, and reflective and critical thinking skills" (Love, 2015, p. 126). More specifically, children develop these skills through intent participation (Rogoff et al., 2003) during Hip Hop communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wilson, 2007), when they keenly observe and listen to their families and communities as they anticipate engaging with them through the elements of Hip Hop, such as language and dance (Love, 2015; Rogoff et al., 2003).

Hip-Hop-Based Education Inside Early Elementary Classrooms. For these reasons, there has been a gradual increase over the last ten years in incorporating Hip-Hop- Based-Education in early childhood classrooms. For example, when Broughton (2017a), a kindergarten and first grade teacher who identifies as a Black male, examined his Hip Hop pedagogy and play in the classroom, he found that he could learn from the children's voices and experiences to support their literacy development in developmentally appropriate ways. Broughton (2020b) adds that Hip Hop culture as play can allow teachers to advance children's developing cultural competence and their identities of self. When Meacham and Meacham (2017) examined young children's peripheral participation in adolescent Hip Hop literacy programs through Hip Hop

writing, recording sessions, and adolescents' performances, they found these experiences allowed children to create their own Hip Hop verses orally with Hip Hop prosody and transcribe their songs with scaffolded support. When Meacham and colleagues (2019) observed kindergarteners and first graders who identified as Black and one who identified as White collaborate with local artists and fourth graders to read and write Hip Hop writing such as songs, they found the children to experience moments of cultural recognition and were motivated to write for authentic purposes. Although Meacham and colleagues (2019) used Hip Hop to support children's literacy development, they note that Hip Hop has not been used in the classroom to support children's FLS development specifically. The findings from these studies suggest that children's Hip Hop identities advance their learning in various ways when they have space in the classroom to incorporate their multiplicities of identities.

Hip-Hop-Based Education Outside Early Elementary Classrooms. For the same reasons, there has also been an increase over the last 30 years in creating Hip Hop artifacts for children, including streaming series, children's literature, and music (Love, 2015). In 2022, Snoop Dogg officially released the YouTube series Doggyland: Kids Songs & Nursery Rhymes, designed to support children's social and emotional development and their learning of basic concepts, such as numbers and letter sound knowledge. In the 2000s, various authors and illustrators used the elements of Hip Hop to create educational children's books, including *Hip Hop Speaks to Children* (Giovanni, 2008), *When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop* (Hill, 2013), and *The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the Pillars of Hip-Hop* (Weatherford, 2019). Authors wrote these books for families to read with their children in Hip Hop communities of practice, highlighting iconic Hip Hop language and legends.

In 2020, Dr. Javoris Hollingsworth and her daughter, Graceyn, created the beloved YouTube series *Gracie's Corner*, which features a young Black girl, her family, and community singing various songs from *ABCs* to *The Wheels on the Bus* over catchy Hip Hop beats. They designed these songs to support children's education in culturally responsive ways considering there was a lack of shows on television during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hollingsworth & Hollingsworth, 2020). When children receive exposure to artifacts like these by their families and communities, they become part of children's Hip Hop communities of practice (Love, 2015). By utilizing the culture and sound of Hip Hop, children engage with fundamental artifacts that provide them with meaningful learning experiences relatable to their identities (Wenger, 1998) and cultures. These relatable learning experiences become meaningful because they provide children with truer and fuller historical representation, context, traditions, and norms (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) while facilitating their cognitive development joyfully (Love, 2015; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). In turn, these Hip Hop artifacts that are a part of the lived experiences children bring to school can be utilized to advance their academic success as valuable scaffolds for new learning (Amanti, 2005; Love, 2015). For these reasons, Di•VERSE Literacy incorporated opportunities for children to utilize their Hip Hop identities and Hip Hop artifacts to advance their learning, specifically in FLS which is a current gap in the research literature. More specifically, this study utilizes Hip Hop culture to sustain and foster children's cultural hybridity while they advanced their PAD in the classroom.

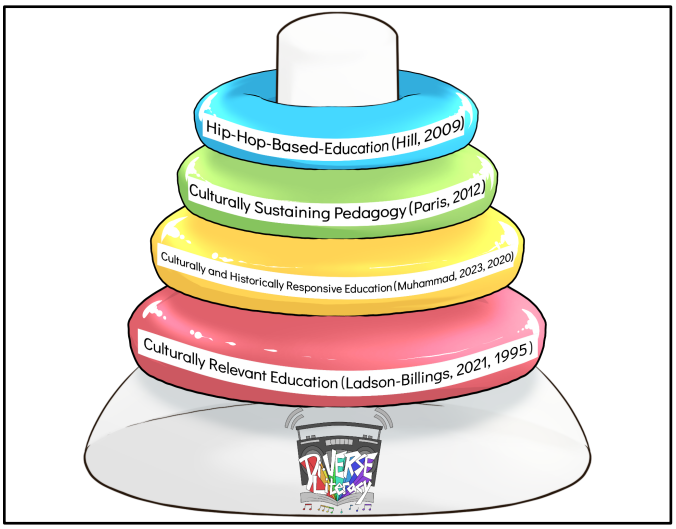
Reimagining Hip-Hop-Based-Education in Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Di•VERSE Literacy created space in the classroom for children to utilize their Hip Hop identities and cultures in numerous ways as they advance their PAD. Considering Hip-Hop-Based Education enhances children's experiences with school curriculum, I used the "smallest

ring" to represent Hip-Hop-Based Education or the fourth influential framework informing the curriculum design (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Design of Di•VERSE Literacy



The first unit incorporated Black Language to provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with opportunities to engage in PAI that recognizes the phonological system of their home language and or the home language of some of their peers, contributing to children's cultural competence and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021). The culturally diverse children's literature was used to compose an interactive rap and Hip Hop song written in Black Language and use the Black Language feature, call and response (Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 1977, 2022), to provide children opportunities to play with familiar vocabulary while developing PA orally.

For example, in the first unit, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, children listened to several read-alouds about the Black community's hair experiences. The rap and Hip Hop song was designed to support children in recognizing beginning sounds in words that incorporated hairstyles from the culturally diverse children's literature in the rap lyrics as the call, such as *lit locs*, for children

to respond with /l/ as the beginning sound in the words in the alliterative phrase. At the end of the unit, after engaging in the interactive rap and Hip Hop song multiple times, children created a self-portrait of themselves using a phrase with two words that began with the same sound, similar to the rap and Hip Hop song and children's literature. Children also had space to create phrases in their home language, such as Black Language. Through these experiences during the teaching and learning exchange, children saw their Hip Hop identities present in their classroom as they advanced their academic skills (Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014) while embracing their cultural capital (Travis, 2013) and experience a sense of belonging (Souto-Manning et al., 2022) at school.

Culturally Diverse Children's Literature

One way young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color can experience a sense of belonging in schools is by engaging with culturally diverse children's literature. Culturally diverse children's literature is texts that include characters with identities and cultures that reflect communities of Color and those characters of Color experiences in the texts reflect the lived experiences of communities of Color that are culturally influenced (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bishop, 1990, 2012, 2014). With these inclusions, children's literature can serve many purposes for young children, including affirmation of their "multiplicities of identities and cultures" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82), exposure to other children's values, beliefs, histories, and experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), entertainment, fostering a love of reading, and informing children of various topics (McNair, 2016). For children's literature to serve these purposes, all children, including children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color, need access to "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1).

Children need access to “mirrors” because mirrors allow readers to see themselves, including their identities, cultures, home languages, and lived experiences in texts (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). Children can see their reflections through “mirrors” in texts by accessing literature that includes characters and themes with which children can self-identify. While children may see some of their identities in one text, they may see their other identities in others (Muhammad, 2023). Children need access to "mirrors" and they also need access to "windows" and "sliding glass doors" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). Through literature, "windows" allow readers to explore new and familiar worlds created by authors, and "sliding glass doors" allow readers to walk through and become a part of those worlds authors create (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). By including all three literature experiences in children’s classrooms and their learning, children’s multilayered identities and cultures will be honored and embraced, and book collections will reflect societal diversity in more just ways (Bishop, 1990; Gay, 2000, 2023; Kelly, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014, 2021; McNair, 2016; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Inclusion of Culturally Diverse Children’s Literature in the Classroom

Several scholars examined the impact of culturally diverse children’s literature on children’s identities and lived experiences (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bennett et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015b; Clark & Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002). They found that when children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color made personal connections with relatable characters and experiences in children’s literature that reflected societal diversity in just ways, children developed more profound meaning-making of the texts, which enhanced their literacy development and comprehension as they saw themselves and others in the texts (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bennett et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015b; Clark &

Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002).

In addition to Stuart and Volk (2002), Bell and Clark (1998), and Souto-Manning (2009) studies that utilized culturally diverse children's literature mentioned previously, Cartledge and colleagues (2015) examined fifty first and second graders who identified as Black comprehension who read and rated thirty culturally diverse passages. After reading the passage, children rated each story using a scale and elaborated on their responses. Researchers found most of the children in both grades liked passages that included a character they could self-identify or included familiar social experiences. When Cartledge and some of their other colleagues (2015) conducted a separate study with eight Black second grade children in special education using culturally diverse and non-culturally diverse passages to assess differences in their reading comprehension to determine the beneficial impact of culturally diverse materials for children from historically marginalized communities. Results showed that children read more words correctly with the culturally diverse passages and most children's responses to the questions on the culturally diverse passages were higher as well. The findings from these studies suggest that when teachers include culturally diverse children's literature in curriculum, they can support young learners' literacy development in two powerful ways at once. They can engage children personally in the teaching and learning exchange by making the content meaningful and relatable while fostering children's academic success (Kelly, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Simultaneously, teachers can use culturally diverse children's literature to create a critical and inclusive classroom learning community (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Kelly, 2019; Purnell et al., 2007). For these reasons, Di•VERSE Literacy incorporated culturally diverse children's

literature so that children could engage in FLI that was meaningful and relatable as a classroom community that recognizes their identities, cultures, and lived experiences.

Exclusion of Culturally Diverse Children's Literature in the Classroom

While culturally diverse children's literature can support children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in many ways, including the ideal balance of "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" in children's classrooms and book collections may be challenging considering the access to culturally diverse children's literature is still gradually improving (Bishop, 1990; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). While the amount of children's literature written and published on communities of Color has increased from roughly 14 percent in 2015 to roughly 23 percent as of 2019 (Cooperative Children's Book Center), there are still many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experiencing a mismatch between their identities and children's books in school curriculum (Au et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020).

Many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color learn to develop FLS using children's literature with "windows" open to the world of White middle-class American norms that usually omit them or rarely mention their lived experiences (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 2021). These kinds of books implicitly imply to children from historically marginalized communities of Color that their experiences do not belong in the classroom because they are not valuable (Bishop, 1990; Souto-Manning et al. 2018, 2022), further pushing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to the margins. Simultaneously, these types of books implicitly imply to White children that their identities and experiences are more valuable than others, further developing an exaggerated sense of themselves (Bishop, 1990; Souto-Manning et al. 2018, 2022). Considering that literature can transform how children

perceive human experiences when it enables them to see their lives and experiences as part of the broader human existence as members of society, reading becomes a means of self-affirmation (Bishop,1990). Classrooms should be places where all children, regardless of their identities and cultures, can see themselves and societal cultural diversity in books while developing literacy skills (Bishop, 1990; McNair, 2016). For these reasons, Di•VERSE Literacy incorporates several culturally diverse children's books written and illustrated by authors and illustrators of Color in the first unit in response to this gap in the research literature.

Strategies for Implementing Culturally Diverse Children's Literature in Instruction

Many young learners develop literacy skills through one significant contributor: read-alouds (McNair, 2011). Morrow and Gambrell (2002) state, "Reading aloud to children has long been advocated as a vital experience in literacy development both at home and in school" (2002, p. 352). The amount of time children spend being read is a significant aspect of literacy development (McNair, 2011). Read-alouds can support all aspects of children's literacy development, including PA (Morrow & Gambrell, 2002; Wright, 2019). Through read-alouds, children can listen to the linguistic features in the words as they listen to the story for comprehension. Another significant aspect of read-alouds is the literature children are engaging in. It is important to include children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color funds of knowledge (Moll & González,1994) in the classroom using children's literature that celebrates their multilayered identities and cultures. When children have the option to select children's literature that interests them, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are more likely to select texts and tend to prefer literature that reflects their personal experiences (McNair, 2011), which makes the need for "mirrors" more critical in classrooms where children develop literacy skills through instruction (Bishop, 1990, p. 1).

Reimagining Culturally Diverse Children's Literature in Phonemic Awareness Instruction

At the foundation of Di•VERSE Literacy is culturally diverse children's literature. Because children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color stories are typically silenced and untold (Adichie, 2009; Bishop, 1990; Muhammad, 2023), the culturally responsive Hip Hop unit centered on an experience familiar to children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color, including hip Black and Brown hairstyles. The remaining units will include the history and influence of Hip Hop culture, historically marginalized communities of Color contributions to society, meaningful and relatable self-affirmations, and the joy within urban intensive communities. During each unit, children will engage with a variety of culturally diverse children's literature written by a range of diverse authors. Because of the authors' multiplicities of identities and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014), children will engage with stories told through rich linguistic practices that provide their experiences and peers' experiences with a truer and fuller representation of their humanity. These rich linguistic practices may be similar to some of the practices of children's families and communities at home. Because of the culturally relatable characters and themes as well as the culturally diverse linguistic practices included in the texts, children will begin each lesson with some familiarity by drawing on their funds of knowledge.

When children were first introduced to a culturally diverse children's book in the first unit, they listened to the text in its entirety to support their meaning making of the text. As literature scholars note, we should respect a book as a book and utilize the literature in the manner authors and illustrators intend. After listening to the texts completely, children engaged in PA activities that used some of the language in the children's books, including Black Language and Spanish. This pedagogical choice was made considering children approach

language experiences, including oral and written, to have meaning (Hiebert, 2017). By listening to culturally diverse read-alouds in children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color home languages and additional languages, children's depth of knowledge of these languages can support their word recognition (Perfetti, 2007) instead of children orally manipulating random words in White Mainstream English that are meaningless and unrelated to each other during instruction.

Through the inclusion of the strength and asset-based frameworks previously mentioned, the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy: A Rap and Hip Hop Phonemic Awareness Curriculum was designed to provide children with three weeks of roughly 25-minute daily lessons that incorporated short-duration, high-intensity culturally and linguistically responsive PAI with explicit connections to reading and writing print (Carson et al., 2013) while providing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with more equitable learning opportunities in racially and culturally just ways. The goal of Di•VERSE Literacy was not for children to assimilate into White ways of existing in the world, the goal of the reconstructed curriculum was for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have space during literacy instruction to use their identities, home languages, and experiences as assets to advance their speaking, writing, and reading skills in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). Another goal of Di•VERSE Literacy was for children to continue expanding their linguistic repertoires by being able to recognize similarities and differences between their home languages, their peers' home languages, and many of their teachers' home language for children to make meaning of their language experiences in the classroom during the teaching and learning exchange through their developing listening skills.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Researcher Positionality

As a Black woman from historically marginalized communities, my diversified background, rich cultural, lived, and language experiences, and valuable funds of knowledge (Moll & González,1994) influenced my researcher positionality. As a young child attending formal schooling (Shujaa, 1993) during the primary grades, I received FLI through White Mainstream English from my kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers who identified as White women. On the first day of school, I entered the classroom with Black Language as my home language and Janet Jackson's *Design of a Decade: 1986 - 1996* as my favorite album at five years old. I listened to the fourteen top hits on repeat, watched the music videos constantly on a VHS tape given to me by my Black preschool teacher, and sang every word in my home language. The greatest hits collection was full of bangin(g) beats, unforgettable hooks, and empowerin(g) lyrics that addressed social issues, making her a role model, my role model at the time. However, my love of her music was limited to my experiences outside of the classroom as a Black kindergartner.

In school, I listened to different genres of music ranging from nursery rhymes to classical to children's music. This was music selected by my teachers that was intended to support my academic growth even though I did not share the same joy and engagement for singin(g) along as the music I listened to at home. As a novice primary grades teacher supporting children who self-identified as Black, Brown, and People of Color in kindergarten and first grade in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, I also played similar music in my classroom, intending to advance children's academic growth. Considering I observed my experienced mentor teachers who identified as White doing the same as a pre-service teacher in urban intensive (Milner, 2012) primary grade

classrooms, I believed some of the children in my class would possibly enjoy the music to a certain extent based on my experience as a kindergartner and children who identified as Black, Brown, and People of Color experiences in my field placements. I also thought some of the children in my class would possibly benefit from exposure to a diverse range of music genres.

Throughout the school day, I noticed children's various levels of engagement with certain types of songs. During our morning routine, we listened to and sang contemporary children's music that allowed them to learn and review basic concepts such as the days of the week and months of the year. During literacy instruction, sometimes, we listened and sang nursery rhymes as they were in the district's mandated literacy curriculum. During math instruction, we listened to music via YouTube that was more upbeat with a familiar sound similar to rap and Hip Hop to enforce skip counting and the recognition of US coins. During other times of the day, such as small group instruction and independent activities, we listened and sang along to parodies of number-one hits, or children would sing rap and Hip Hop songs in acapella. Throughout their music experiences in the classroom, I noticed some children's minimal engagement with songs during literacy instruction while observing the same children sing and hum mainstream rap and Hip Hop when they had space to sing a song of choice while staying on task.

In my current role as a teacher, researcher, and activist, I began reflecting on my former kindergartners and first graders' love of rap and Hip Hop (culture). I began to reflect on my music experiences as a kindergartner as well. I began reimagining my engagement level in the classroom if I had the opportunity to have music experiences that were parallel to my cultural, lived, and languages experiences, such as my experiences of listening and singing to Janet Jackson's music with similar beats, hooks, relatable topics, and Black Language as I became exposed to being a reader in the raciolinguistic context at school. In my ideal kindergarten

utopia, I imagine that if I had the opportunity to listen to and sing along with Ms. Jackson while developing PA through Black Language, I believe I would have received culturally affirming, meaningful, and relatable instruction while advancing my academic achievement. As I began reimagining my former kindergarteners and first graders' engagement level in FLI with music, I also imagined that if they had familiar rap and Hip Hop experiences in the classroom that were parallel to their experiences at home to support their literacy development, they may have received culturally affirming, meaningful, and relatable instruction while also advancing their academic achievement.

As a scholar interested in cultivating young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color genius (Muhammad, 2020, 2023), I am interested in supporting children in furthering their academic growth in FL, particularly PA, through culturally and linguistically affirming experiences in the classroom.

Overview of the Research Design

In order to support children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in engaging in culturally and linguistically affirming experiences during FLI, I used culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as the foundational framework throughout all of the phases in this mixed methods study that incorporated qualitative and quantitative methodologies. As I designed Di•VERSE Literacy, I also drew on the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model as an instructional framework for culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014), and Hip-Hop-Based-Education (Hill, 2009) to inform the curriculum design. Qualitative research methodologies were used to conduct a case study (Compton-Lilly, 2021; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 1995) to examine how children who self-identify as

Black, Brown, and People of Color experienced culturally responsive and asset-based rap and Hip Hop PAI through Di•VERSE Literacy, including how the curriculum supported children's developing cultural competence and critical consciousness as well as the five pursuits of the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model. Simultaneously, quantitative research methodologies were used to conduct the pre-and post-assessment component of the study to measure how culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop PAI in Di•VERSE Literacy influenced children's PAD to answer the research questions guiding this study (Compton-Lilly, 2021; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Heath & Street, 2008; McCarthey, 2021; Nardi, 2018; Weiland et al., 2021). I asked the following research questions:

- How does Di•VERSE Literacy influence the phonemic awareness development of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color?
- How do children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience Di•VERSE Literacy?

Leaning into Cochran-Smith and Lyte's (1993) assertion that teachers typically generate questions when they recognize a disparity between intentions and implementations in the classroom, as a former public school teacher in Detroit, MI and current researcher, I recognized a disparity between the type of instruction children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color were intended to receive and the influence of that implemented instruction. Additionally, I recognized the critical outcome of the disparities between children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and teachers' cultures and experiences hindering children's academic success in schools as a result of systemic racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

While many White teachers' unconscious biases and prejudices as a result of systemic racism may allow them to believe children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color should engage in FLI similar to the type of instruction they engaged in as primary grade children, many White teachers are unaware of the harm children experience when they do not have the opportunity to engage in instruction that is culturally and linguistically affirming (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). To answer the two research questions, I used theoretical and empirical education research to inform the decisions of this study to create space for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have the opportunity to engage in culturally responsive FLI that embraced their identities and lived experiences as assets to advance their academic achievement in the classroom through the implementation of Di•VERSE Literacy (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Design, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

I began conducting this study in January 2022, and I completed the study in October 2024 through four data collection phases (Table 1). The study's first phase was my development of the first unit of the culturally responsive PA curriculum, Di•VERSE Literacy. This phase began in January 2022 and continued until August 2024, overlapping with the second phase. The study's second phase was the pilot implementation of the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy with third graders who self-identified as Black, Brown, and People of Color attending a historically underserved and under-resourced public school in the US Midwest by their principal who self-identified as a Black woman. This study phase occurred over four weeks in March and April 2024. After the pilot, the lessons were revised for the study's next phase. The third phase was the implementation of the first unit with first graders who self-identified as Black, Brown, and

People of Color attending a different historically underserved and under-resourced public school in the US Midwest by their teacher who self-identified as White. This study phase occurred over five weeks in September and October 2024. The fourth phase of the study included conducting three focus group interviews with children utilizing storytelling (Heath, 1982; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) for them to share their experiences engaging in the culturally responsive and asset-based rap and Hip Hop PA curriculum. I conducted each focus group interview after the teacher, Ms. Kos, implemented a week of instruction or about five days of instruction. This study phase occurred during the same five weeks in September and October 2024 as the third phase.

Although I utilized four strength and asset-based frameworks (Hill, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014) to develop Di•VERSE Literacy in the first phase, I utilized culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to conduct the remaining three phases of the study to examine children who self-identified as Black, Brown, and People of Color classroom experiences to advance their academic growth in PA while simultaneously further developing their cultural competence and critical consciousness as well as pursuits in a joyful way. Additionally, I used culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to conduct the remaining three phases of the study to support teachers in implementing culturally responsive resources during FLI to create space for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to engage in more culturally and linguistically affirming experiences that are more equitable and just.

Table 1

Phases of the Research Design

Phase of Study	Phase Design	Research Questions	Time Period to Complete the Phase	Data Collected in Phase
Phase One	Design unit one of the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum		January 2022 - December 2023	Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum
Phase Two	Pilot implementation of unit one of Di•VERSE Literacy with a third grade class		Four weeks in March and April 2024	Video and audio recordings of lessons and my informal observations to inform Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum revisions
Phase Three	Implementation of unit one of Di•VERSE Literacy with a first grade class	How does Di•VERSE Literacy influence the phonemic awareness development of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color?	Five weeks in September and October 2024	Video and audio recordings of lessons, my informal observations during the lessons, my researcher memos, and children's artifacts from the Di•VERSE Literacy lessons
Phase Four	Conduct focus group interviews with first graders about their experiences engaging with Di•VERSE Literacy	How do children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience Di•VERSE Literacy?	Five weeks in September and October 2024	Video and audio recordings of interviews, my informal observations during the interviews, rmy researcher memos, and children's artifacts and individual reflections

Phase One

In order to design the culturally responsive FL curriculum for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to recognize that their identities and lived experiences

belong in the classroom and can be used to support their academic growth, the first phase of this study was informed by several strength and asset-based frameworks (Hill, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014) in which I developed Di•VERSE Literacy as a solution to the "practical and complex educational problem" during FLI to provide "context for empirical investigation" that generated theoretical understandings and has the potential to inform the education field and research in the future (McKenney & Reeves, 2012, p. 6). More specifically, I chose these strength and asset-based frameworks to inform the design of the reconstructed curriculum considering the practical and complex educational problem that exists between the experiences children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and their teachers bring to school that impedes young children's FLD (Carey et al., 2018; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Since many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experiences in the classroom impede their academic growth (Carey et al., 2018), I selected culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as a foundational framework to guide the design of the reconstructed curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023). I also chose culturally relevant education to provide children with literacy experiences that center their racial and ethnic identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2021; Muhammad, 2000, 2023). By starting with children's identities, children could see themselves in their learning (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2021; Muhammad, 2000, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018) through beautiful representations of imagery, rich linguistic practices, and culturally influenced lived experiences, and were more likely to engage in the instruction provided (Ladson-Billings, 2014, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2017, 2022). As children progressed through the curriculum, they had additional opportunities to continue seeing their race and ethnic

identities as well as their other identities during instruction (Hill, 2009; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). For instance, when children engaged in the first unit, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, children engaged in various culturally diverse children's literature, such as *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barens, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), to name a few. As children learned to recognize the beginning sounds in words, they engaged in texts that acknowledged their humanity and confirmed their truer and fuller identities (Muhammad, 2023) by recognizing that they do matter in the world in which children are reminded throughout the entire unit and curriculum design symbolized through the crown template they added to their artifacts (Figure 6).

Figure 6

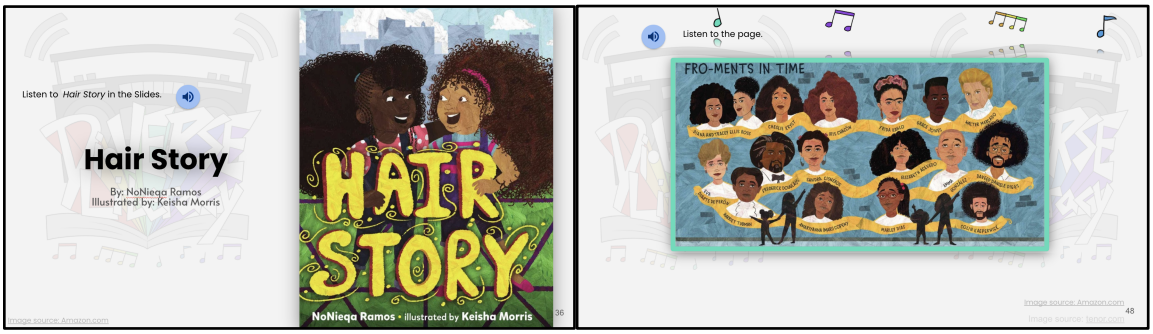
Crown Illustrations and Templates in the Instructional Slides

While many children's racial and ethnic identities were recognized throughout Di•VERSE Literacy, the histories of their communities were also recognized throughout the curriculum in order for children to "understand equity, justice...excellence" and joy (Muhammad,

2023, p. 14). For this reason, I used the five pursuits part of the Histories, Identities, Literacies, and Liberation Model as an instructional framework for culturally and historically responsive education in addition to the culturally relevant education framework to inform the design of the reconstructed literacy curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023). Throughout the unit, children had ample opportunities to reflect on the brilliance and triumphs of historically marginalized communities of Color in various ways. For example, when children learn to identify the beginning sounds in words during the first unit, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, children engaged with culturally diverse children's literature, such as *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) that recognize "fro-ments in time," which created space during literacy instruction for children to learn about the history of their ancestors and cultural icons through their hairstyles with ties to the present (Ramos, 2021, p. 24) (Figure 7).

Figure 7

Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



Additionally, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color entered the classroom with their racial and ethnic identities, and they entered with "multiplicities of [their] identities and cultures" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82) that shape their experiences in the world. For this reason, Di•VERSE Literacy considered children's additional identities and experiences, such as Hip Hop (culture). By adding the culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) framework to inform the design of the reconstructed curriculum (Ladson-Billings,

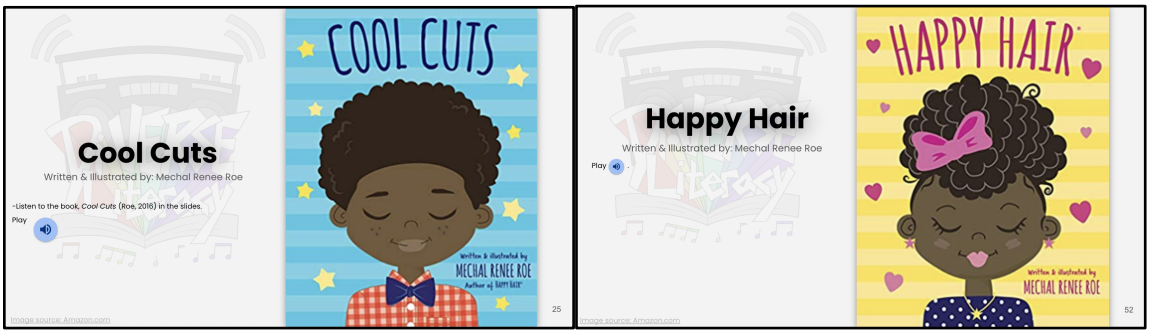
2021; Muhammad, 2023), children had space during literacy instruction to engage in Hip Hop-Based-Education (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Hill, 2009) and used their Hip Hop identities and culture as assets to advance their learning. Hip Hop-Based-Education (Emdin, 2010; Graves et al., 2020; Hill, 2009) recognizes children's experiences that are influenced by the culture of Hip Hop, such as their language, fashion, and music selections (Hill, 2009; Love, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Children had opportunities to bring their Hip Hop experiences including language, fashion, and music selections into the classroom throughout the unit by singing an interactive rap and Hip Hop song based on the culturally diverse children's literature in the unit for children to engage with as they developed PAS. These strength and asset-based frameworks were chosen in response to the disparities existing between the experiences children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and their White teachers bring to school as a result of systemic racism to better support children's literacy development (Carey et al., 2018; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014). By using these frameworks to inform the design of the reconstructed curriculum, teachers could create opportunities for culturally relevant, historically responsive, and sustaining education experiences for children when implementing Di•VERSE Literacy.

Overview of the Unit Design. The first unit, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, began instruction by recognizing children's racial and cultural identities through their crowns, their hair (Figure 8). The unit was named after Roe's (2020, 2021) culturally diverse children's picture books to continue uplifting Blackness in the curriculum and supporting children in practicing self-love (Muhammad, 2023). The unit included a total of fifteen 25-minute lessons that span across three weeks of instruction. Each week of instruction included five lessons.

Figure 8

Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



Week One of Di•VERSE Literacy.

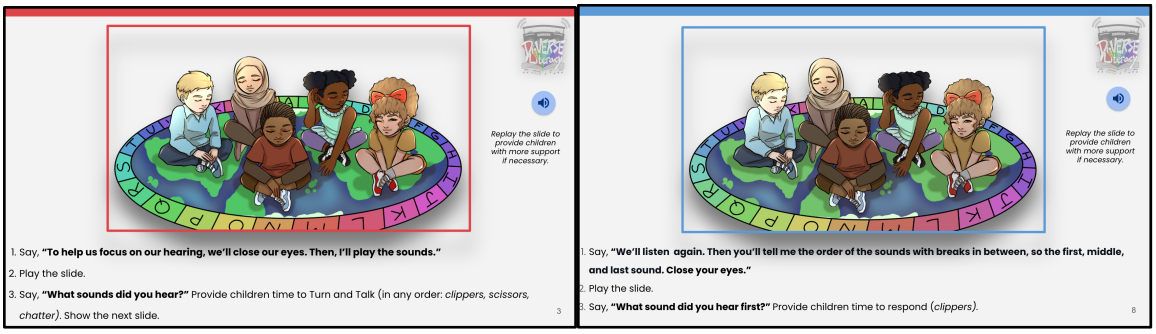
The first three lessons during the first week of instruction provided children an opportunity to practice all five PAS, using familiar sounds in urban intensive (Milner, 2012) communities. The lessons also included an opportunity for children to review alphabet knowledge with the Di•VERSE Literacy alphabet wall cards or ABC wall cards (Appendix A) and children's alphabet charts (Appendix A). During the next three lessons leading into the second week of instruction, children listened to the text, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and completed various literacy activities based on the vocabulary and language in the text to support their PAD.

Practicing Phonemic Awareness Skills With Familiar Sounds.

During the first and second day of instruction during the first week, children began the lessons by listening to various audio recordings of three sounds they associated with a place in their community. Three sounds were chosen for each place, considering children in kindergarten are expected to be able to orally manipulate words with three sounds or phonemes (CCSS, 2021; Ehri, 2020; Lindsey, 2022). For example, children began the first lesson by hearing clippers, scissors, and chatter simultaneously (Figure 9). After identifying the three sounds, children listened to the sounds in order and identified the beginning, ending, and medial sounds individually. Next, children listened to the sounds in a different order with breaks in between and slid through the sounds to make one smooth sound to practice blending. Then, children listened to the sounds in a different order in one smooth sound and children separated the smooth sound into three individual sounds to practice segmenting. During the literacy activity, children had the option to name the sounds or mimic the sounds.

Figure 9

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides



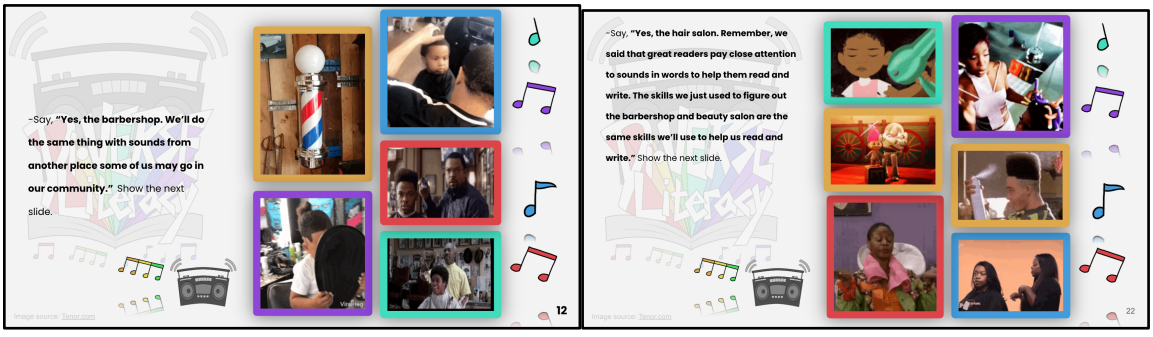
These pedagogical choices were chosen because of the PA progression many scholars suggest for children to develop PA. The progression begins with hearing phonemes, and advancing to generating, isolating, blending, and segmenting (Lindsey, 2022; NELP, 2008; NRP, 2000). Although children manipulated familiar sounds in their community instead of phonemes,

the goal of this literacy activity was for children to recognize the PAS they would use to build a solid foundation for decoding and encoding development or reading and writing in a culturally responsive and joyful way (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023) before engaging with phonemes.

Once children practiced the five skills, children thought of a place they might associate the three sounds. For example, children might associate the sounds of clippers, scissors, and chatter with a barbershop or the sounds of hair spray, hair washing in a sink or bowl and a hair dryer with a beauty salon or their home. After guessing the correct place with prompting and support when necessary, children saw a collage of gifs, short soundless video clips that played on loop or repeat that represented the place with ties to their communities. To represent the barbershop, children saw gifs from barbershop scenes from *Coming to America* with Eddie Murphy and *Barbershop* with Ice Cube as well as two young Black boys getting their haircut and a barber's pole (Figure 10). To represent the beauty salon, children saw gifs from beauty salons including Destiny's Child music video, Bugaboo, *House Party*, Martin, *Hair Love* (Cherry, 2019), the Oscar winning short film, and the *Toy Story* series (Figure 10).

Figure 10

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides

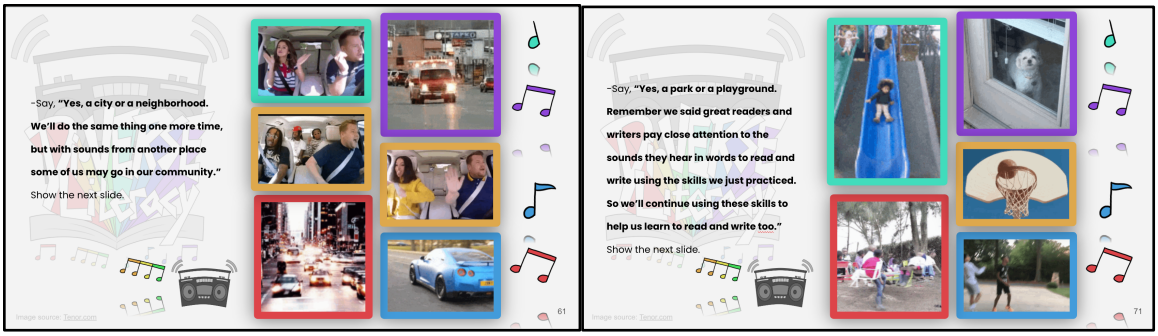


These visuals were chosen to continue providing children with a variety of cultural references through the past and present to include children's histories and traditions during FLI as they

developed PA (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). In addition to the barbershop and beauty salon, children practiced PAS with three sounds associated with an urban intensive neighborhood or city, and a park or playground in one of those cities (Figure 11).

Figure 11

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides



Considering these are places many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color may be familiar with, children had more opportunities to draw from their funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) in a culturally engaging way (Hill, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014) to support their meaning making which is the ultimate goal of literacy development (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001).

The Alphabet Wall Cards and Children's Alphabet Charts.

While traditional FL curriculum includes alphabet wall cards, a common staple in early childhood classrooms, so does Di•VERSE Literacy. To continue providing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with opportunities to incorporate their identities and lived experiences that were culturally, racially, and historically influenced into the reconstructed curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), I collaborated with Vitorio Penzabene who self-identifies as Black, a rap and Hip Hop songwriter, and chose words and images that represented Black, Brown, People of Color and Hip Hop cultures for each letter of

the alphabet. Then I collaborated with Dilan Haung who self-identifies as a Person of Color and illustrator, who illustrated the images (Appendix A) as well as the other illustrations included throughout the curriculum. For example, instead of including a bat or a ball to represent "B" spells /b/, I included a Black breakdancer with his boombox and cardboard box dancing in front of a crowd (Figure 12). The illustration also included a Black deejay to continue representing Hip Hop culture. To support children in making real world connections to the term, *breakdancing*, the instructional slide included a gif of the Hip Hop dance crew, the Jabbawockeez as well as a clip of their performance during the 2022 NBA finals (Jabbawockeez Official, 2022) that included instrumental rap and Hip Hop music like Jay-Z (2006). Instead of including a goat or a guitar to represent "G" spells /g/, I included a man of Color with a grill and glasses, standing in front of a Hip Hop mural, with a subtle nod to Jean-Michel Basquiat who is spray painting, considering he is known as Hip Hop's favorite artist (Inside Edition, 2018) (Figure 12).

Figure 12

ABC Wall Card for "B" and "G" in the Instructional Slides

To support children in making real world connections to the terms, *graffiti* and *grill(z)*, the instructional slide recognized Basquiat's painting, Pez Dispenser, of a T. rex with a gold crown to represent that he is the king of the art world the same way T. rex is the king of the dinosaurs

(Inside Edition, 2018) in the mural as well as photographs of Basquiat and a gif from Nelly's and Paul Wall's music video, Grillz.

The vocabulary from Black Language and Hip Hop culture and the images on the wall cards and alphabet charts were designed for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to have easy access to a literacy resource to support their alphabet knowledge when looking at the front of the classroom or at their seats to reference at any time while reading and writing using their alphabet charts (Figure 13). The images were easily accessible to children as a resource to support their literacy development, and they provided children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with appealing visuals that were culturally and racially influenced around their classroom to provide children with a sense of belonging as they advanced their academic growth at school which has been missing historically and today in many US primary classrooms (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2023, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2015; Milner, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Figure 13

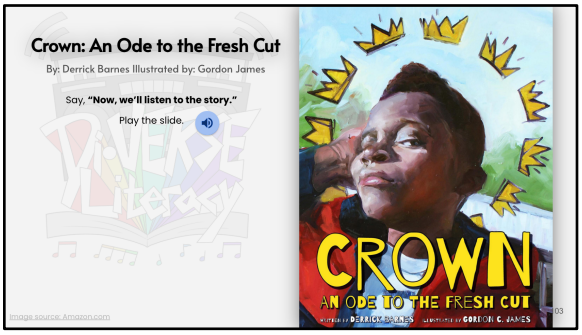
Children's Alphabet Chart in the Instructional Slides

Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut Read-Aloud and Activities.

The next three days of instruction during the first week included listening to the text, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James (Figure 14).

Figure 14

Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides



In the text, a Black boy visits the barbershop and gets a fresh cut that makes him feel magnificent and flawless like a *king* (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bennett et al., 2017; Bishop, 1990; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015; Clark & Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Muhammad, 2023; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002), seconding Basquiat's use of the crown.

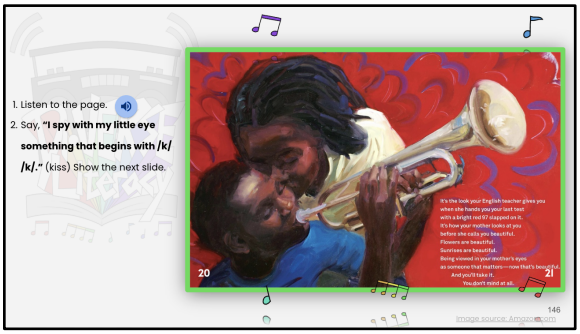
Before children engaged in the text, the first lesson began by recognizing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color as *kings* and *queens* on the first day of school when they entered the classroom to remind children *who* and *whose* they were (Muhammad, 2023), similar to the communities of practice children engage in with their families and communities at home (Lave & Wenger, 1991). My introduction to the text explained how some royals wear crowns on their heads, while the children in the class and members of the community of practice wear their crowns daily through their stylish hairstyles. To continue providing children with equitable education opportunities that were culturally and linguistically affirming, I read the text to children through audio readings to provide children with an opportunity to listen to the text from a Black Language speaker, considering my familiarity with children's experiences and some of our shared cultural, lived, and language experiences as well (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad,

2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). I collaborated with Jermaine Shufford, who self-identifies as Black, an audio engineer to record my reading of the read-aloud.

During the first listening of the text, the children listened to the text in its entirety for a few reasons. By listening to the text in its entirety, children had the opportunity to make meaning of the text and experience joy during FLI (McNair, 2016; Muhammad, 2023). After listening to the text in its entirety as authors intend and literature scholars recommend, children manipulated sounds in words to recognize the beginning sounds from the text. During the second lesson centering *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), children played iSpy after listening to the page where they found something in the illustrations with the provided beginning sound in the word, requiring children to segment the beginning sounds to recognize objects in the illustrations (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, after listening to the text and the phoneme, /k/, children recognized the mom was giving her son a *kiss* (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Pages from Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides



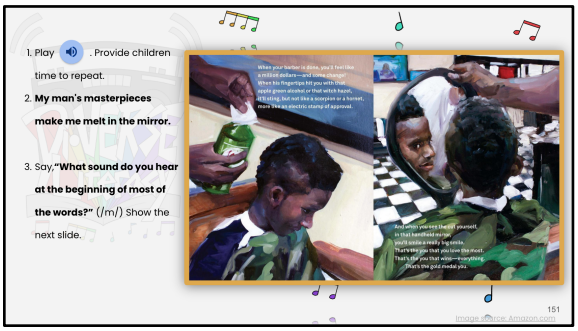
These pedagogical choices were made to provide children with an opportunity to manipulate words orally that had meaning, considering children expect literacy activities to have meaning (Hiebert, 2017; Perfetti, 2007) as opposed to recognizing the beginning sounds in a series of unrelated words in White Mainstream English as a literacy activity. Certain words were also chosen to provide children who were visual learners with an additional resource while

developing PA, considering some traditional literacy curriculum include mostly auditory activities.

After playing iSpy, children listened to tongue ticklers based on the text, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017). Tongue ticklers are sentences with multiple words that begin with the same beginning sound. Once children listened to the tongue tickler I recorded and repeated it, they identified the sound they heard at the beginning of most words in the sentence and identified the letter that spelled that sound, making a direct connection to print (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, children listened to and repeated the tongue tickler, *My man's masterpieces make me melt in the mirror*, and recognized that most of the words began with /m/ and that "M" spelled the sound (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Tongue Tickler Based on Crown in the Instructional Slides



Tongue ticklers were chosen to provide children with opportunities to engage in Black Language and Spanish in a joyful way as listeners and speakers while also developing their PA in the classroom, especially considering Black Language has been historically marginalized as a literacy resource (Baker-Bell, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020).

The second day of instruction centering *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) concluded with a worksheet activity. Before children engaged in the exercise, children went over

the words and images they would see on the worksheet in the instructional slides based on the vocabulary from the text to continue supporting children's meaning making (Figure 17).

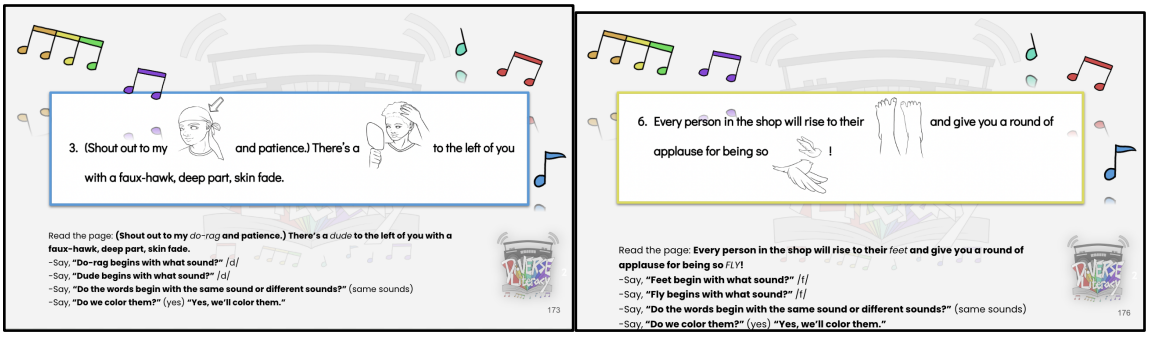
Figure 17

Crown Beginning Sound Matching Worksheet Vocabulary in the Instructional Slides

This also provided children with illustrations that were culturally and racially influenced such as *dude* and *man* or *barber* (Figure 17). Some of these were also words that included kindergarten and first grade spelling patterns recognized in CCSS (2021) and MK-12SELA (2021). Next, children colored the images if two words began with the same sound or crossed them out if they began with different sounds. For example, after recognizing that *do-rag* and *dude* or *feet* and *fly* began with the same sounds, children colored the two pictures (Figure 18). Considering these were words many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color may be familiar with from home, they used their familiarity to develop literacy skills in the classroom in a meaningful and relatable way.

Figure 18

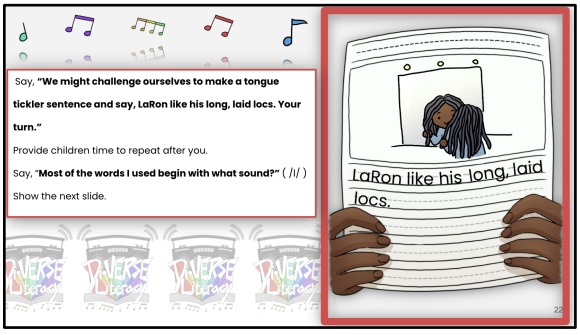
Crown Beginning Sound Matching Worksheet in the Instructional Slides



During the third day of instruction centering the text, *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), children created tongue tickler phrases using one of the words that named an image from the text in the previous lesson with scaffolded instruction. Then children had an option to challenge themselves and turn their phrase into a tongue ticker sentence in any language of their choice, including their home languages. As a class, children began the lesson by reviewing three examples together. For instance, children began with an illustration of a Black boy with locs. After recognizing that locs began with /l/, children thought of other words that began with /l/ that described the locs such as the length, the color, and how nice the locs look. Then with prompting and support, children could create the tongue tickler sentence, *LaRon like his long, laid locs,* in Black Language (Figure 19).

Figure 19

Tongue Tickler Based on Crown in the Instructional Slides



Then children repeat the same steps when they see a pair of feet. After recognizing that feet began with /f/, children thought of other words that began with /f/ that described the feet such as how they can move (e.g. fast). Then with prompting and support, children could create the sentence, *Fatima's fast feet feel the fuzzy rug,* in White Mainstream English (Figure 20).

Figure 20

Tongue Tickler Based on Crown in the Instructional Slides

These examples and others provided children with space during instruction to include vocabulary from Black Language and additional languages. They also provided children with complete sentences in Black Language that followed the language grammar rules (Meier, 2008) and other languages during FLI.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair Rap and Hip Hop Song.

At the end of the same three lessons, children engaged in the rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, which was based on the four culturally diverse texts included in the unit (Figure 21). The song, written and recorded by Deante Alexander who self-identifies as Black, and produced by Troy Burns who self-identifies as Black, incorporated hairstyles and experiences included in the texts and the Black Language feature, call and response (Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 1977, 2022), to provide children an opportunity to orally manipulate words in some children's home languages to support their PAD in a culturally and joyful way (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023).

Figure 21

Cool Cuts Happy Hair Rap and Hip Hop Song in the Instructional Slides

For example, when children heard *fab fro* as the call, children responded that the phrase began with the sound, /f/. When children heard the phrase *hip hijab*, children responded that both words begin with /h/. Additionally, the instructional slide with the rap and Hip Hop song provided children with a visual representation of a group of children who identify as Black, Brown, People of Color and White, singing and dancing in stylish kicks as an subtle ode to the children in my former kindergarten and first grade classes whose experiences inspired the design of the reconstructed curriculum to continue uplifting Black and Hip Hop culture. By incorporating Black and Hip Hop culture during FLI, children had space in the classroom to advance their literacy development through a musical genre similar to a genre some children listened to at home and in their community.

Week Two of Di•VERSE Literacy.

The first three lessons during the second week of instruction followed the same sequence of literacy activities children completed with *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017), with the text, *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021). By following the same routine, children had an opportunity to further advance the PAS they were developing in a familiar way while engaging in a text with additional meaningful and relatable lived experiences. During the fourth lesson,

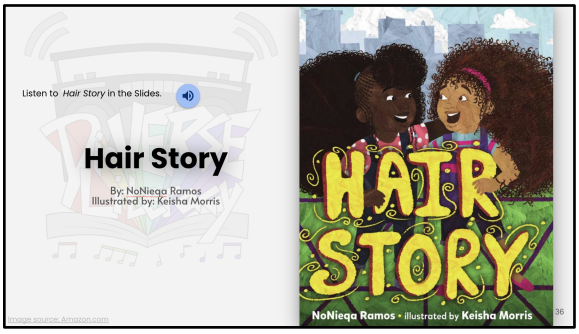
children played a beginning phoneme dominoes matching game that incorporated words and images based on the two texts from weeks one and two lessons.

Hair Story Read-Aloud and Activities.

The next three days of instruction during the second week included listening to the text, *Hair Story* by NoNieqa Ramos and illustrated by Keisha Morris (Figure 22).

Figure 22

Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



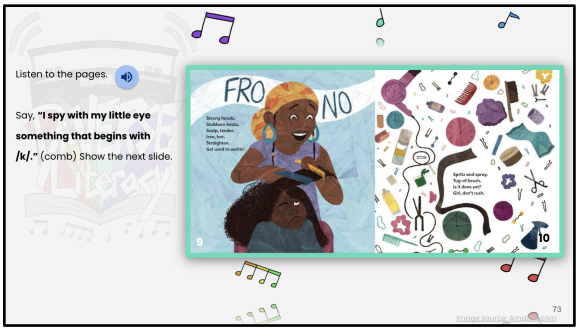
In the text, a Black girl and Brown girl realize their hair likes to be free. As the girls think about their hair, they realize their hair tells the story of the women in their families, ancestors, and cultural icons and represents who the girls are (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bennett et al., 2017; Bishop, 1990; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015; Clark & Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Muhammad, 2023; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002). To continue providing children with equitable education opportunities that were culturally and linguistically affirming, I also read this text to children through audio readings to continue providing children with opportunities to listen to read-alouds in the classroom in Black Language during FLI (Baker-Bell, 2020; Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014).

During the first listening of the text, the children listened to the text in its entirety for the same reasons authors intend and literature scholars recommend by respecting a book as a book.

During the second reading, children manipulated sounds in words to recognize the beginning sounds from the text. During the second lesson including *Hair Story*, children played iSpy after listening to the page where they would find something in the illustrations with the provided beginning sound, requiring children to think about the objects in the illustration (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, after listening to a page and the phoneme, /k/, children recognized *comb,* which is in the Black mom's hand while she's doing her daughter's hair in the illustration (Figure 23).

Figure 23

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



These pedagogical choices were made to continue providing children with opportunities to manipulate words orally that had meaning, and children might use at home in relation to the unit's theme. They were also chosen to continue providing children who were visual learners with an additional resource while developing PA.

After playing iSpy, children listened to tongue ticklers based on the text, *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), following the same routine as the week before. Tongue ticklers are sentences with multiple words that begin with the same beginning sound. Once children listened to the tongue tickler I recorded and repeated it, they identified the sound they heard at the beginning of most words in the sentence. Then, they identified the letter that spelled that sound, making a direct connection to print (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, children

listened and repeated the tongue tickler, *The beautiful brown baby's belleza beamed*, and recognized that most of the words began with /b/ and that "B" spelled the sound (Figure 24).

Figure 24

Tongue Tickler Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

Tongue ticklers were chosen to continue providing children with opportunities to engage in Black Language and Spanish in a joyful way as listeners and speakers while also developing their PA in the classroom. The second day of instruction centering *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) concluded with a similar worksheet activity as the week before for children to continue identifying beginning sounds in words from the text. Before children engaged in the exercise, children went over the words and images they would see on the worksheet in the instructional slides based on the vocabulary in the text to continue supporting children's meaning making and providing children with illustrations that were culturally and racially influenced (Appendix A). For example, children identified the beginning sounds in words like *bun*, and *spray* (Figure 25).

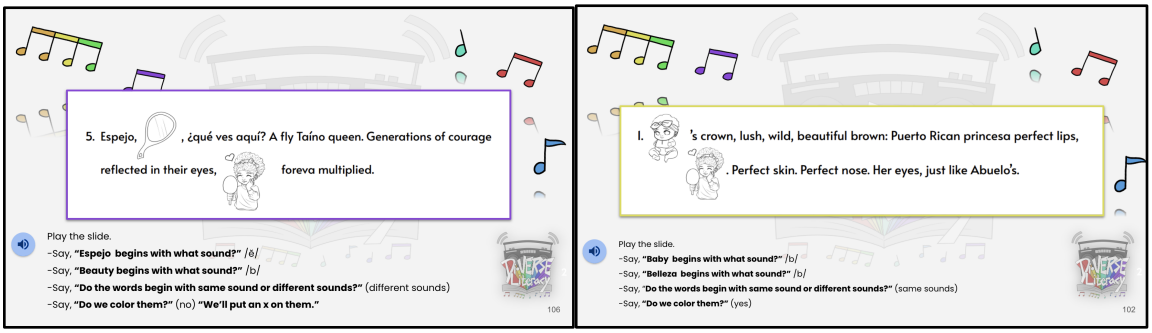
Figure 25

Hair Story Beginning Sound Matching Worksheet Vocabulary in the Instructional Slides

These were also words that included kindergarten and first grade spelling patterns recognized in CCSS (2021) and MK-12SELA (2021). Next, children identified the beginning sounds they heard in two words, colored the images if they began with the same sound or crossed them out if they began with different sounds. For example, after recognizing that *espejo* and *beauty* or *belleza* did not begin with the same beginning sound, children drew an "X" over the two pictures. After recognizing that *baby* and *belleza* began with the same beginning sound, children colored the two pictures (Figure 26).

Figure 26

Hair Story Beginning Sound Matching Worksheet in the Instructional Slides

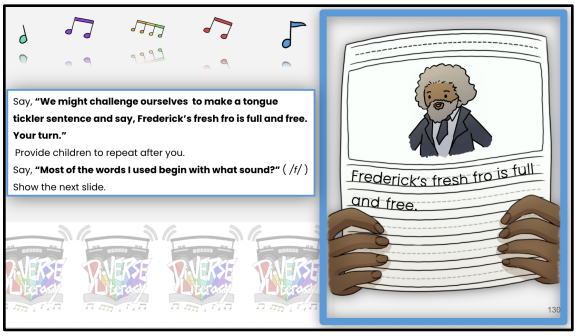


During the third day of instruction centering the text, *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), children created more tongue tickler phrases using one of the words that named the images from the text in the previous lesson with scaffolded instruction. Then children had space to challenge

themselves and turn the phrase into a tongue tickler sentence in any language of their choice including their home languages. As a class, children began the lesson by reviewing three examples together. For example, children began with an illustration of a Fredrick Douglass. After recognizing that Fredrick hair was a fro and that Fredrick and fro began with /f/, children thought of other words that began with /f/ that described his fro such as *fresh* and *free*. Then with prompting and support, children might create the sentence, *Frederick's fresh fro is full and free* (Figure 27).

Figure 27

Hair Story Tongue Ticklers in the Instructional Slides



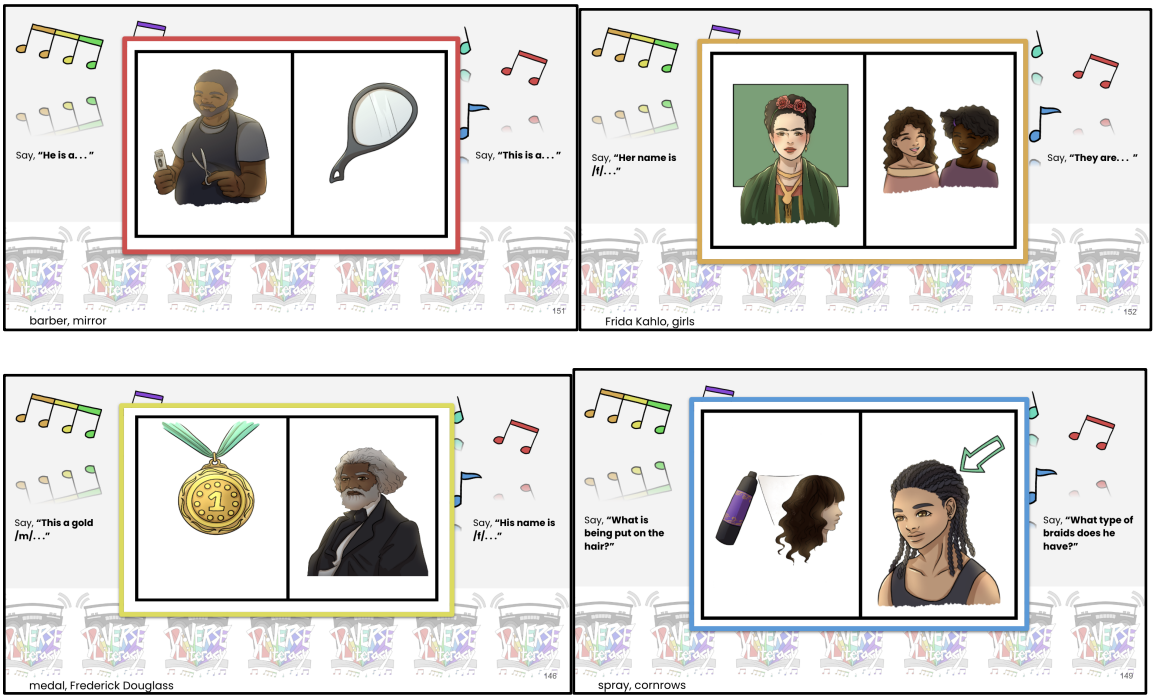
At the end of the three lessons, children engaged in the same rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, which was based on the four texts included in the unit for children to continue developing PA in a culturally and familiar musical way.

Beginning Phoneme Dominoes Matching Game.

After engaging in *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), children played a beginning phoneme dominoes matching game that used some of the vocabulary and images from the worksheet activities based on both texts (Figure 28). This activity provided children with an additional opportunity to manipulate the beginning sounds in familiar words to advance their PAD through their home languages and during the previous instruction as review.

Figure 28

Crown and Hair Story Beginning Phoneme Dominoes in the Instructional Slides



Before children played the literacy game, children went over the vocabulary and images together as a class with sentence starters to support their recognition. Then children were put into pairs. With their partners, children received modeling from their teacher on connecting the first few dominoes together as a class so that children could continue playing the game independently or with the support of a classmate. After playing the game once, children switched roles to have an opportunity to match all the images by the beginning sound in the names of the illustrations. This pedagogical choice was chosen to provide children with a similar activity as a picture sort to support their PAD (Bear et al., 2000; Meier, 2008). Instead of sorting a series of images into two or three categories by beginning sounds, children used the same PAS while using literacy resources that recognized their identities, home languages, and experiences in a more engaging and meaningful way. Depending on children's experiences with the activity and literacy

development in recognizing beginning sounds in words, teachers could repeat the lesson for a second day of instruction.

Week Three of Di•VERSE Literacy.

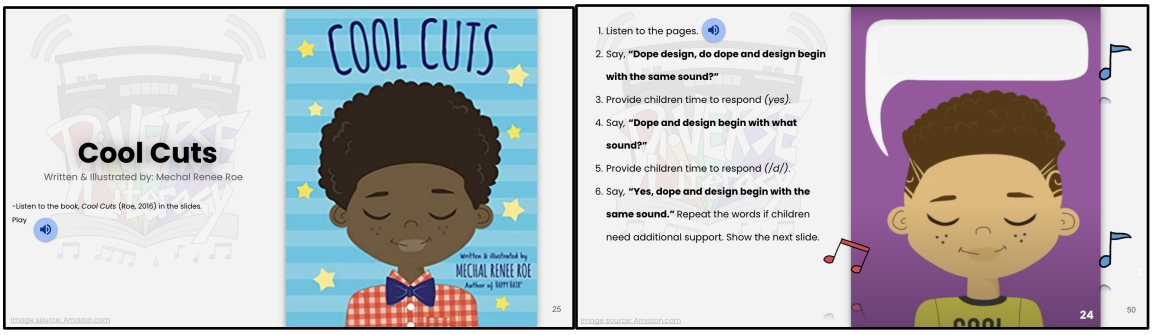
The first lesson during the third week of instruction included an opportunity for children to listen to the texts, *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2020) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2021). The second lesson involved children creating the class text variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*. The third lesson involved children reading the class book together and recognizing the beginning sounds in the phrases children selected for their individual pages of the text with their self-portraits and stylish hairstyles.

Cool Cuts and Happy Hair Read-Alouds.

The first day of instruction during the third week followed the same routine when children were first introduced to a text during the first two weeks of instruction. Children began the lesson by listening to the text, *Cool Cuts,* written and illustrated by Mechal Renee Roe (Figure 28). The text includes several hip Black and Brown hairstyles while also providing boys with self-affirmations to complement the beautiful self-portraits to promote self-love (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bishop, 1990; Bennett et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015; Clark & Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Muhammad, 2023; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002). After children listened to my audio recordings in Black Language of the entire text as Mechal intends, children listened to the text a second time manipulating the words or phrase, naming the hairstyle above the self-portrait on each page (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, after listening to the phrase, *dope design*, children recognized both words in the phrase began with /d/ (Figure 29).

Figure 29

Pages from Cool Cuts in the Instructional Slides



Then children repeated the same steps with the text, *Happy Hair* written and illustrated by Mechal Renee Roe (Figure 29), which also included several hip Black and Brown hairstyles while providing girls with self-affirmations to accompany the gorgeous self-portraits to provide them with happy reflections to promote their self-esteem (Bell & Clark, 1998; Bishop, 1990; Bennett et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2015; Cartledge et al., 2015; Clark & Flemming, 2019; Fain, 2008; McNair, 2011; Muhammad, 2023; Pilonieta & Hancock, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2009; Stuart & Volk, 2002). After children listened to my audio recordings in Black Language of the entire text as Mechal intends, children listened to the text a second time, manipulating the words or phrase naming the hairstyle above the self-portrait on each page (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000). For example, after listening to the compound word, *primped-press*, children recognized both small words in the compound word began with /p/ (Figure 30). Children concluded the lesson by listening to the interactive rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair.

Figure 30

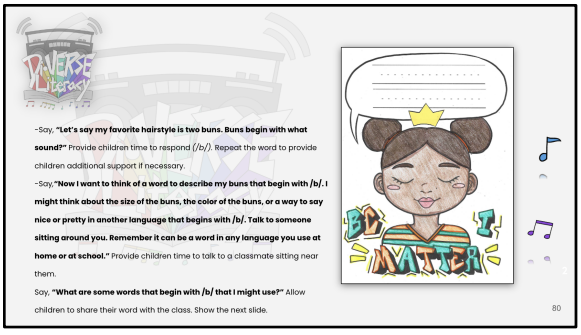
Pages from Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides

Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair Class Book.

On the second day of instruction during the third week, children received scaffolded instruction in creating additional phrases for some of the hairstyles in the texts or additional hairstyles similar to the ones in the texts, *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2021) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020). First children began the lesson by seeing a Brown complexed girl from a historically marginalized community with two buns in a similar self-portrait and speech bubble format as the pages in the texts, with the phrase, BC I MATTER in graffiti which is also the title of a text I plan to include in the reconstructed curriculum in a future unit (Figure 31).

Figure 31

Creating Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



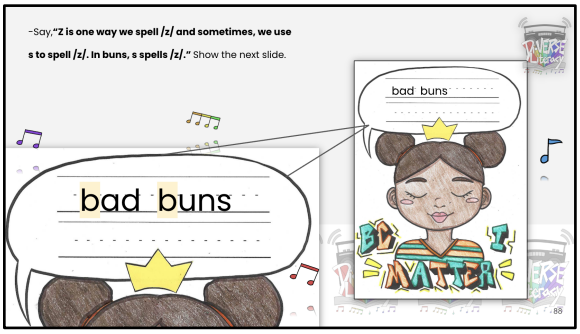
Additionally, the self-portrait included a crown template similar to Basquiat's and the Black boy from *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) to continue reminding children who self-

identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color of their identities and lived experiences at home through culturally affirming practices that continues to recognize children as *kings* and *queens*. With prompting and support, children thought of words that began with the same sound as *buns* to describe them. Children could consider the color, size, and look of the buns.

Children might also consider using vocabulary from their home languages such as Black Language and Spanish. For example, the buns were described as *bad* which means good in Black Language or *bonitos* which means pretty in Spanish. With explicit modeling and support, children received support in breaking the words *bad* and *buns* into individual sounds through segmentation and then spelling each sound and receiving explicit cues in print concepts (Figure 32). This explicit instruction also provided children with PAI in a culturally responsive way by segmenting three and four phoneme words which is a FLS (CCSS, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023).

Figure 32

Creating Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



While children were encouraged to decode the two word phrases that include words with FLS they are developing (CCSS, 2021; MK-12SELA, 2021), children received modeling to read the phrases with spelling patterns children have not been taught. The children followed the same steps with a self-portrait of a Brown complexed boy from a historically marginalized community with a *mad mushroom* which means cool mushroom in Black Language. After, children decoded

additional phrases, using two more self-portrait examples, including *hip hijab* and *wet waves* (Figure 33).

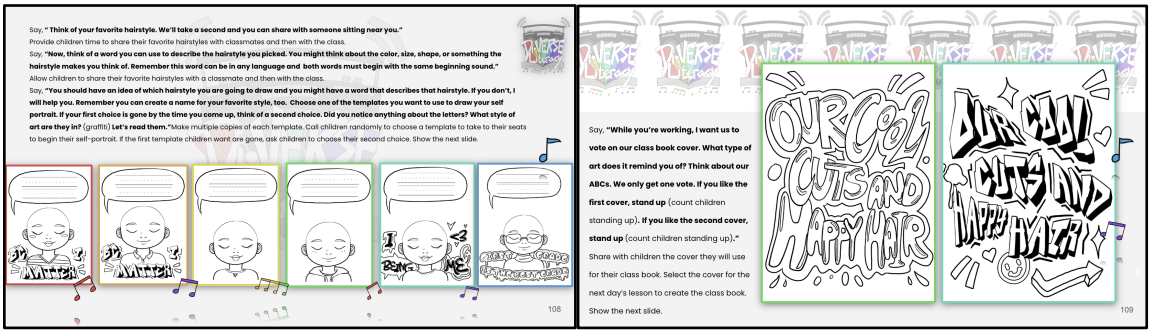
Figure 33

Creating Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides

Once children received explicit instruction in creating self-portraits and two word phrases, children created their own self-portraits of themselves with their favorite hairstyles with space to include the phrase they chose and the crown they saw in the examples similar to Basquiat's. To continue uplifting children's voices, children selected their self-portrait template of choice with various Hip Hop aesthetics (Love, 2015) and voted on the cover of their class book variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, in two graffiti styles (Figure 34). As children worked on their self-portraits, children listened to the interactive rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair. Teachers might consider having children take turns coloring the cover before assembling the text together. Teachers may also consider providing children an additional day of instruction to complete their self-portraits.

Figure 34

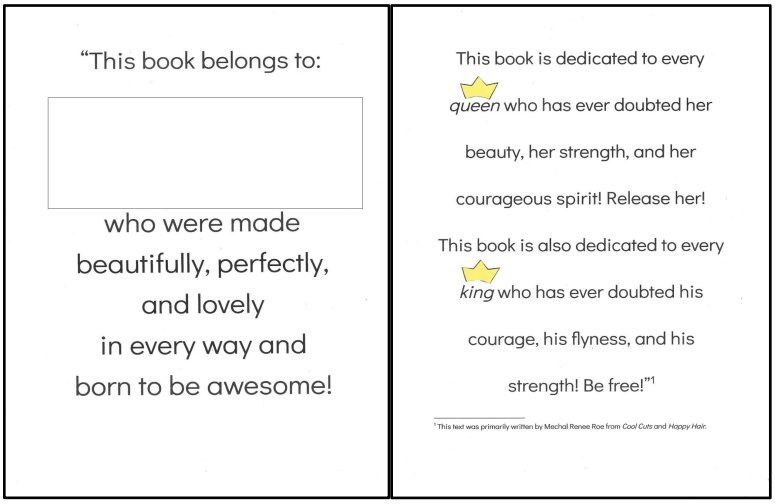
Creating Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



On the third day of instruction, children read and listened to the class variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair,* to support their recognition of beginning sounds in words with a direct connection to reading and writing print (Figure 35). As children took turns reading their page to the class and not showing the page, the teacher prompted the class to identify the beginning sound they heard in the two words and what letter or letters spelled the sound. Then the child or the teacher would share the page with the class for children to see the completed self-portraits. After children engaged with the text they created to support their literacy development, the teacher is encouraged to place the children's text in the classroom library to provide children an authentic audience (Muhammad, 2020) and for children to visit throughout the school year to continue experiencing joy that is culturally and racially influenced. Teachers may also consider providing children an additional day of instruction to share their self-portraits with the class or with another primary grade classroom.

Figure 35

Pages from Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Children's Class Book Variation



Phase Two

The study's second phase included an elementary principal, Ms. Vaughn, who identified as a Black woman and volunteered to pilot and implement the unit on identifying beginning sounds in words with exposure to the remaining four PAS and direct connections to print. Children in third grade attending an elementary school located in an urban intensive community (Milner, 2012) in the US Midwest where they self-identified as Black, Latinx and White, participated in the pilot phase of the study with their assent and their families' consent as mandated by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) and school district. Ms. Vaughn selected this third grade class based on children's experiences in K-2 while developing their FLS. The children in this class were in PK during the 2019-2020 school year, which was the same academic year as the COVID-19 pandemic. Because schools shut down abruptly in March 2020, children's experiences in pre-K prevented them from engaging in the year-long curriculum in the classroom. As kindergarteners during the 2020-2021 school year, the children in this class engaged in mostly virtual learning with additional classroom lock downs as a result of the

ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2021-2022 school year, children attended first grade, adjusting to a new normal at school which shed insight into additional educational disparities (Ladson-Billings, 2021). As second graders during the 2022-2023 school year, children received instruction from a long term substitute as a result of their second grade teacher resigning. As third graders during the 2023-2024 school year, the children's third grade teacher took a leave of absence. Based on the children's experiences as young learners in K-3, children in the class encountered many educational disparities and inequities while striving to succeed in school, life, and society by building a solid literacy foundation. For these reasons, Ms. Vaughn volunteered to implement the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy to provide the children with additional support in developing their literacy foundation. To support the third graders in advancing their FLS while simultaneously piloting the intervention, I revised the lesson materials to incorporate additional literacy skills based on their strengths and areas of growth such as blending, segmenting, and more advanced spelling patterns.

Specifically, this phase of the study's design included ten third graders engaging in the 25-minute daily lessons implemented by Ms. Vaughn for three weeks of instruction for a total of 12 lessons. This study phase utilized a case study research design (Compton-Lilly, 2021) to provide new insight by analyzing children who self-identify as Black and Brown experiences with culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop PAI to inform the curriculum revisions for the next study phase. The lessons were video and audio recorded to better understand students' engagement and experiences using Di•VERSE Literacy (Compton-Lilly, 2021). While watching the video and audio recordings, I wrote initial analytical memos (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013) using thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) reflecting on children's engagement and experiences with the curriculum that I observed in relation to utilizing Horvat's (2013) questions for data analysis.

The five questions Horvat (2013) uses for preliminary data analysis include (1) What did you learn from this data?; (2) What did you think of the data?; (3) What was interesting, troubling, compelling, surprising, and/or intriguing?; (4) What questions were raised for you?; and (5) What are some decisions that might be made going forward? By answering these questions while I reflected on each lesson, I made connections between the intended instruction I wanted to provide the third graders through the design of the curriculum and how I noticed children engaging in the instruction. Considering I piloted Di•VERSE Literacy with third graders to inform the curriculum redesign for the next phase, I did not further analyze the data collected.

Phase Three

The study's third phase included an elementary teacher, Ms. Kos, who identified as White to implement the first unit on identifying beginning sounds in words. Children in first grade attending an elementary school located in an urban intensive community (Milner, 2012) in the US Midwest where children self-identified as Black and People of Color, participated in the study with their assent and their families' consent as mandated by the university Institutional Review Board and school district. Specifically, this phase of the study's design included:

- Children completing a one-on-one PA pre-assessment that I administered to children before the three weeks of instruction;
- Children engaging in 15 25-minute daily lessons implemented by Ms. Kos;
- Children completing the same one-on-one PA assessment as a post-assessment that I administered to children after the three weeks of instruction.

This study phase also utilized a case study research design (Compton-Lilly, 2021) to provide new insight by analyzing young children who self-identify as Black and Arab experiences with culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop PA instruction. By implementing the

intervention with children in one first grade class and analyzing children's academic and sociocultural experiences in depth, I was able to examine marginalized communities historically underserved by the United States education system (Compton-Lilly, 2021; Dyson & Genishi, 2005) as a result of systemic racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Additionally, the study's pre-post assessment research design (Appendix A) component provided valuable evidence of children's academic growth in PA to gauge the influence of the culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop curriculum contributing to children's academic growth in PA (Weiland et al., 2021). Each of the 15 lessons were video and audio recorded and transcribed for analysis to understand children's engagement and experiences better using Di•VERSE Literacy (Compton-Lilly, 2021). While Ms. Kos, children's teacher volunteered to teach the 15 lessons, I made myself available to provide her support, to answer questions about the curriculum, to adjust the lessons to better support children in the class and help prepare the materials for the lessons throughout the curriculum implementation.

After having the recorded lessons transcribed, I watched and listened to the video and audio recordings alongside transcripts of the lessons to make connections between children's actions and discussions during instruction in relation to the tenets of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and the five pursuits of culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to answer the first research question. The research question examined during this phase of the study was, How does Di•VERSE Literacy influence the PAD of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color? Then, I wrote initial analytical memos (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013) utilizing thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) to reflect on children's engagement and experiences with the unit that I observed in response to Horvat's (2013) questions for data analysis. By answering these questions while I reflected on

each week of lessons and observations in rich detail, I made connections between the intended instruction I wanted to provide children through Di•VERSE Literacy and how I observed children engage in the instruction.

During the lessons, I recorded moments in the analytical memos when I recognized children advancing their academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) by engaging in PAI when they answered questions, sang responses to the call and response (Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 1977, 2022) in the rap music, made a direct connection between the oral PA activities and reading and writing explicitly in children's artifacts, and children's growth in PA from the pre-and post-assessment.

The pre-and post-assessment assessed the five PAS, including identifying initial, final, and medial phonemes and blending and segmenting phonemes. Each subsection included seven words or items. Children's responses were recorded as one point if children responded correctly to each item. Each subsection was scored individually. If children correctly responded to six or seven items for each subsection, children were *displaying* the targeted PA skill. If children correctly responded to five of the seven items, children were *exploring* the target PAS. If children could not provide a response or correctly answer up to four items, children were *being introduced* to the targeted PAS. The pre-and post-assessment also included reading and writing subsections in decoding and encoding single-syllable words. Each subsection included ten words. Children's responses were also recorded as one point if children responded correctly to each item. Each subsection was also scored individually. If children correctly read or spelled eight to ten words correctly, children were *displaying* the targeted FLS. If children correctly read or spelled seven of the ten words, children were *exploring* the targeted FLS. If children could not provide a response or correctly answer up to six of the ten words, children were *being introduced*

to the targeted FLS. This rubric was used to score children's assessment performances similar to the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile's (2001) PA assessment. After scoring children's pre-and post-assessment performance, I compared children's pre-and post-assessment scores to determine if children responded correctly to more individual items for each subsection during the post-assessment. After comparing the scores, I used the rubric described to determine if children's assessment performance for each subsection advanced from *being introduced* to *exploring* the targeted FLS, or from *exploring* to *displaying* the targeted FLS after the three-week intervention (Appendix B). By observing children's academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) in PA as they worked towards the pursuit of skills (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) in foundational literacy, children demonstrated the academic gains they made by engaging with the reconstructed curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023).

I recorded moments in the analytical memos when I recognized children advancing their cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) when children demonstrated their understanding of their cultures and the cultures of their classmates by engaging in the culturally diverse children's literature written on various experiences, and working with their peers to create children's artifacts to support their recognition of similarities and differences between their experiences and the experiences of their peers to understand the multicultural world better. I noticed children's growth in cultural competence when children listened attentively to the read-alouds, made personal connections between themselves and their peers to the texts, and included their personal experiences that are culturally influenced during instruction to complete tasks and create artifacts. By observing children's growth in cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they are worked towards the pursuit of identity (Muhammad, 2020, 2023), children

demonstrated their growing understanding of themselves and others in ways that allowed them to understand different perspectives while also embracing the essence of their being.

I recorded moments in the analytical memos when I recognized children advancing their critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) when they recognized inequities and injustices in school and society, such as recognizing that Di•VERSE Literacy created space in the classroom for children to use their home languages in the classroom through the culturally diverse children's literature, children's conversations during instruction, and children's artifacts. When children recognized that injustices and inequities previously prevented them from using their home languages and many of their lived experiences that are culturally influenced in the classroom to advance their academic success, children had space in the classroom to embrace their fuller identities and use their developing knowledge in relatable ways. By observing children's growth in critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they worked towards the pursuits of intellect and criticality (Muhammad, 2020, 2023), children demonstrated their growing understanding of societal injustices in order to experience joy (Muhammad, 2023) and use their developing skills to apply to real world settings.

While reflecting on the analytical memos alongside the transcripts of the video and audio recordings (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013), I used In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to analyze the data using children's languages. More specifically, I used children's words verbatim when including their responses to questions during instruction, the language they used during discussions with each other and Ms. Kos, and the exact wording children used in their written artifacts. I selected In Vivo coding to continue amplifying children's voices and experiences, considering children's voices are "often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens an adult's understanding of their cultures and worldviews" (Saldaña, 2013,

p. 91). After completing the first round of coding using the analytical memos, I compared the analytical memos to the first research question, the tenets of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and the pursuits of culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to create inductive codes (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013) to find patterns across the children's experiences. Because the children were likely to use terms from their everyday lives and home languages instead of "terms derived from the academic discipline" (Stringer, 1999, p. 91), I completed a second round of coding using deductive codes (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013), the tenets of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and the pursuits of culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to create themes based on the codes (Table 2).

Table 2

Sample Themes and Codes Related to Di•VERSE Literacy's Influence on Children's Phonemic Awareness Development

Theme	Code	Description	Examples
Academic Success and the Pursuit of Skills: Children demonstrated academic gains engaged in Di•VERSE Literacy by responding to questions correctly and completing the literacy activities.	"Nose" "Dark do-rag" "Pretty puffballs"	Children identified the beginning sounds in words and phrases through various literacy activities during the intervention, utilizing their literacy skills.	Aaron answered "nose" with scaffolded support from Ms. Kos to identify an illustration that began with /n/ during iSpy. Chris answered "dark do-rag" with scaffolded support from Ms. Morse, their classroom volunteer, when children created tongue tickler phrases with two words that began with the same sound. Brianna created the phrase "pretty puffballs" for her self-portrait for the class book, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hai*r, when she used two words with the same beginning sound to name her favorite hairstyle.
Cultural Competence and the Pursuit of Identity: Children advanced their developing	"My mom"	Children made connections between the content in Di•VERSE	Alvin shared "my mom" has an afro when children reviewed the letter "A" in the Di•VERSE Literacy ABCs.

Table 2 (cont'd)

cultural competence while in pursuit of identity when they engaged in Di•VERSE Literacy, which allowed them to see themselves and others in just ways.	"Aye…that's you!" "Bonnet"	Literacy and their identities, home languages, and lived experiences through "mirrors" and "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1).	When the class reviewed the letter "O," Aaron recognized similarities between one of his classmates' hairstyle, Eli, and one of the kids in the illustration's hairstyle. During the lesson, he told Eli, "Aye, Eli, that's you!" Destiny and Brianna identified the do-rag as a bonnet during the beginning sound dominoes game considering the parallels they recognized between the two items and haircare in the Black community.
Critical Consciousness and the Pursuits of Intellect and Criticality: Children engaged in Di•VERSE Literacy, which allowed them to recognize inequities and injustices through humanizing and compassionate learning opportunities.	"His do-rag isn't dirty…" "Po po" "Barbershop Boss"	Children understood that Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction to use their identities and home languages to support their learning in a meaningful and relatable way.	Shayla recognized the phrase "dirty do-rag," associated Blackness with inferiority and corrected her classroom volunteer, Ms. Morse by stating, "His do-rag isn't dirty. It's clean!" Eli recognized he could use his home language or Black Language in the classroom when answering questions to demonstrate the same meaning in White Mainstream English such as "po po" when he identified one of the sounds during the Playing With Sounds activities. Alvin used his home language to create the phrase for his self-portrait. He wrote, "I am a barbershop boss," to recognize that he is a *king* in Black Language instead of only using the meaning in White Mainstream English.
The Pursuit of Joy: During the teaching and learning exchange, children had space to experience joy by seeing themselves fully through the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum.	"Great" "Fun" "Yay"	Children expressed their enjoyment of engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy through their responses related to various components of the curriculum.	Aaron shared that, "[He] was feeling great playing dominoes [with] Chris," recognizing the happiness he experienced during the literacy activities. Chris said, "[He] had the most fun playing the dominoes," emphasizing the joy he experienced during phonics instruction. Shayla cheered, "Yay," when Ms. Kos agreed to play Cool Cuts Happy Hair next during one of the lessons.

Phase Four

The fourth phase of the study involved interviewing (Vanover et al., 2021) children in focus groups utilizing storytelling (Heath, 1982; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) to reflect on their

experiences engaging with Di•VERSE Literacy through three short focus group interviews (Appendix C). After each week of lessons or series of related lessons, children completed an individual reflection about their experiences during the described instruction their teacher, Ms. Kos, provided by drawing a picture of themselves in their classroom, showing how they felt when they did the literacy activities in the reconstructed curriculum at school (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023). They also thought of a few words that described how they felt, what they learned and anything the activities made them think about during the lessons. Then, in small groups, they told me a story about what it was like to complete the literacy activities and listen to the text(s) from each week of instruction. Children used their drawings, feelings, and thoughts about the culturally diverse children's literature and literacy activities to tell their stories. While children utilized storytelling (Heath, 1982; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) to share their experiences with the reconstructed curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023), I asked clarifying follow-up questions to understand children's stories and experiences better. While many Black families approach literacy using dialogue with an emphasis on oral storytelling and their literacy approach is rarely acknowledged as a written composition in schools (Heath, 1982), Pahl and Rowsell (2011) recognize that literacy can be found within storytelling and educators can use storytelling to advance children's literacy development and support their meaning-making of their literacy experiences.

Based on my previous experiences conducting FL interventions with first and second graders who self-identified as Black, Brown, People of Color and White, the ten-minute focus group interviews provided valuable insight into children's experiences using the culturally responsive PA curriculum that centered their identities and experiences (Vanover et al., 2021). During the focus group interviews utilizing storytelling (Heath, 1982; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011),

children reflected on their experiences and thoughts about the instruction and materials they used while engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy. Providing children space to share their opinions about their experiences allowed me to better understand their experiences instead of using my observations alone (Compton-Lilly, 2021), considering children are the true experts of their lives (Tisdale, 2016). In response to reliability and trustworthiness, I member checked in with children to ensure I recorded their responses as they intended to reflect their experiences by summarizing their responses and providing children space to tell if I did not record their responses correctly (Compton-Lilly, 2021). After each video and audio recorded focus group interview, I had them transcribed verbatim for data analysis. Once all the focus group interviews were transcribed, I followed a similar process as I planned to analyze the data to answer the first research question during the study's third phase.

During the study's fourth phase, I also utilized Horvat's (2013) five questions for preliminary data analysis. By answering these reflexive questions, I connected children's stories, the lesson observations, two of three tenets of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), and four of the five pursuits of culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to answer the second research question. The second research question I examined was, How do children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience Di•VERSE Literacy? While analyzing the focus group interview transcripts, I used In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to record keywords and phrases that children used to tell their stories in the analytical memos (Saldaña, 2013) when I noticed children mentioning their developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and worked towards the pursuit of identity (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). I noticed this when children mentioned similarities and differences between their experiences and the experiences of their peers. By looking for

children's growth in cultural competence as they worked towards the pursuit of identity, children demonstrated how they made sense of their identities and experiences as well as their peers in racially and culturally just ways while in the classroom.

I used In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to note words and phrases that children used to share their stories and to answer follow up questions in the analytical memos when I noticed children mentioning their developing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and worked towards the pursuits of intellect and criticality (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). I noticed this when children mentioned their experience using their home language in the classroom during literacy instruction as well as engaging in instruction while their peers used their home languages as well. By looking for children's growth in critical consciousness as they worked towards the pursuits of intellect and criticality, I examined how children recognized societal injustices instead of internalizing the problem within themselves during FLI.

I used In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to note words and phrases that children used to tell their stories and to answer follow up questions in the analytical memos when I noticed children mentioning their pursuit of joy (Muhammad, 2023). I noticed this when children mentioned experiences that made them happy during the intervention. By examining children's pursuit of joy, children explained the aspects of the curriculum that allowed them to experience happiness in ways that they may not have experienced before during FLI.

After completing the first round of In Vivo coding (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013), I compared the analytical memos to the second research question to create inductive codes (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013) to find patterns across the children's experiences. Then, I completed a second round of coding using deductive codes (Galman, 2016; Saldaña, 2013), two of the three tenets of culturally relevant education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), and four of the

five pursuits of culturally and historically responsive education (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) to create themes based on the codes, using terms from the academic discipline (Stringer, 1999) (Table 3). This data analysis process paralleled the data analysis process used during the third phase of the study.

Table 3

Sample Themes and Codes Related to Children's Experiences With Di•VERSE Literacy

Theme	Code	Description	Examples
Cultural Competence and the Pursuit of Identity: Children advanced their developing cultural competence while in pursuit of identity when they engaged in Di•VERSE Literacy, which allowed them to see themselves and others in just ways.	"ABCs" "She looks like me…"	Children made connections between the content in Di•VERSE Literacy and their identities, home languages, and lived experiences through "mirrors" and "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1).	Alvin drew the Di•VERSE Literacy ABC wall cards in his individual reflections, demonstrating how he saw himself, his family, and his communities in the content during literacy instruction. When Ashley reflected on the ABCs she liked during the focus group interview, she shared all the ones that incorporated Black girls and women were her favorites. During the focus group interview, Shayla said she liked *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) because the Black girl on the cover "looks like me because we have the same skin color." She recognized similarities between her identities and the culturally diverse children's book.
Critical Consciousness and the Pursuits of Intellect and Criticality: Children engaged in Di•VERSE Literacy, which allowed them to recognize inequities and injustices through humanizing and compassionate learning opportunities.	"Mirror mirror on the wall…" "Chicken wings church"	Children understood that Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction to use their identities and home languages to support their learning in a meaningful and relatable way.	Brittany's favorite part in *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) was "the pages with the girls looking in the mirror, saying mirror, mirror on the wall," which incorporated Black Language and Spanish instead of the classic fairytale in White Mainstream English. Eli used Black Language to create his phrase for his self-portrait, "chicken wings church." During the focus group interview, he added that chicken wings were one of his favorite foods and he went to church with his godparents. Eli recognized he had space to draw from his meaningful lived experiences to support his learning in the classroom.

Table 3 (cont'd)

The Pursuit of Joy: During the teaching and learning exchange, children had space to experience joy by seeing themselves fully through the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum.	"Happy" "Fun"	Children expressed their enjoyment of engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy through their responses related to various components of the curriculum.	Eli wrote, "I was happy," when he completed his third individual reflection reflecting on his experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy. When Chris reflected on his experiences with the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum, he wrote, "I had fun" to describe his experiences.

Participant Selection

Research Site

This study was conducted in a first grade classroom at an elementary school in an urban intensive (Milner, 2012) public school in the US Midwest during September and October 2024. As of 2023, roughly 19 percent of children were considered proficient in literacy, according to the school district (usnews.com), making culturally responsive literacy instruction essential for children's academic growth at the elementary school. During the 2023-2024 academic year, 261 children attended the school in grades PK-1. 53% of the children identified as Black, 28% of the children identified as White, 1% of children identified as Latine, less than 1% of children identified as Asian, and 13% of children identified as two or more races. 52% of the children identified as female and 48% of the children identified as male. 83% of the children attending the school participated in the federal-assisted program, the National School Lunch Program. In first grade, there were six classes attending face-to-face instruction.

Participants

Participants in the study included 13 out of 15 first graders in one of the six first grade classes. Children in the class gave their assent to participate in the study, and their families gave their consent. Of the 13 children, 11 children self-identified as Black, and two children self-

identified as Arab. There were six females and seven males in the class (Table 4). Children's ages ranged from six to seven years old. Of the 13 children, seven children used Black Language in the classroom, two children were multilingual learners and spoke Arabic as their home language, and four children used White Mainstream English in the classroom. Two children, Simone and Walter, did not participate in the pre-and post-assessment. Since they received support as multilingual learners during a portion of the class phonics block most mornings, Ms. Kos and I agreed for Simone and Walter to participate in the lessons and individual reflections utilizing storytelling. Additionally, Simone was absent from the first eight lessons of the intervention due to visiting family in her home country. This particular first grade class was selected for the study considering their teacher, Ms. Kos, volunteered after being informed about the study as a grade level team by her principal.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Sex	n	Race /Ethnic Identity	n	Linguistic Practices	n	Ages	n
Female	6	Black	11	Black Language	7	Six	10
Male	7	Arab	2	Arabic	2	Seven	3
				White Mainstream English	4		

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was that only the first unit was implemented with children due to logistical constraints. While the long term goal of Di•VERSE Literacy is to support children in developing all five PAS, children received explicit or direct instruction that emphasized identifying beginning sounds during the first unit. Additionally, children received implicit or indirect support in the other four PAS through my curriculum design and the

scaffolded support incorporated in various lessons in the first unit. I made these decisions to examine children's experiences with Di•VERSE Literacy to inform the design of the remaining four units.

Although there was a limitation to the study, there were also affordances of the Di•VERSE Literacy unit. This study and curriculum will be of particular interest to teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals committed to striving toward equitable literacy instruction for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color. This will also address gross inequities in children's access to equitable education opportunities. Teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals concerned about improving the educational conditions of children from historically marginalized communities in primary grades and beyond must uphold teaching practices and theoretical frameworks that honor and embrace children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color cultural and racial identities while advancing their literacy development in US classrooms.

Presentation of the Findings

I explain the presentation of the findings in the remaining chapters of the dissertation. In Chapter 4, I describe and analyze the data collected for the case study to answer the first research question. I explain the findings from the various data sources collected to understand how Di•VERSE Literacy influenced the PAD of children who self-identified as Black and Arab.

In Chapter 5, I describe and analyze the focus group storytelling transcripts, alongside transcripts from the lessons, to answer the second research question. I explain the findings from

the children's focus group interviews in relation to the other data sources to understand how children who self-identified as Black and Arab experienced Di•VERSE Literacy.

In Chapter 6, I discuss how the findings of the two research questions fill gaps in the existing literature. I explain implications for teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals to better support young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color as well as future research. The chapter concludes with the significance of this study on providing young children with equitable learning opportunities that embrace their identities and cultures while furthering their FLD.

This study will add to the research literature on culturally responsive FL experiences of young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in primary grades and early childhood classrooms. This study has been and will continue to be shared through publications in academic and practitioner journals, popular press, and presentations at professional conferences of organizations such as the American Education Research Association, Literacy Research Association, National Council of Teachers of English and Michigan Reading Association to support teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in improving young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color educational conditions.

CHAPTER 4 - DI•VERSE LITERACY'S INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S PHONEMIC AWARENESS DEVELOPMENT

To provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with an equitable educational foundation that ensured that they attain the same educational goals fairly and successfully while receiving individualized support to achieve these goals (Gay, 2023; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013), specifically in PA, I designed the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy in response to the result of the "culture and teaching gap" (Carey et al., 2018, p. 89). To examine the influence of the unit on participating children's PAD, I asked the following research question: How does Di•VERSE Literacy influence the PAD of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color? I examined the influence of the first unit on children's PAD by administering a one-on-one PA pre-and post-assessment to measure children's academic growth after engaging in the intervention.

The Pre-and Post-Assessment

Eleven of the thirteen participating children engaged in six oral and auditory literacy subsections and one spelling subsection as part of the larger one-on-one pre-and post-assessment (Appendix A). These literacy subsections were administered so children could share their knowledge in PA before engaging in the intervention. When children responded to questions, they had space to respond using their home languages and or languages they used in the classroom. Although children were not explicitly encouraged to respond using the language(s) they were most comfortable with in the assessment instructions, children's responses were acceptable in Black Language and or White Mainstream English. Children shared their response in the one language they chose for each individual item. The first five subsections included children listening to seven words for them to demonstrate their PAD. Each word was a single-

syllable word with three or four phonemes or sounds in Black Language or White Mainstream English and related to the unit theme or from the culturally diverse children's books, hip Black and Brown hairstyles (e.g. bad, wet, locs, puff).

The next subsection of the larger one-on-one pre-and post-assessment (Appendix A) included children decoding or reading a list of ten words. The ten words included two to four phonemes and common sounds the alphabet spells. Many of the words were also connected to the unit theme (e.g. bun, dab, top, cuts). The last subsection included children encoding or spelling a list of ten words. The ten words included the same features as the words in the decoding subsection (e.g. win, rub, next, hand).

After children engaged in the three weeks of instruction or the first unit, they completed the same assessment as the post-assessment. These literacy subsections were readministered so that children could share their knowledge in PA after engaging in the intervention to measure their academic learning. Because children were in various stages of development, the findings below were organized based on children's pre-and post-assessment performance to reflect the various ways the intervention influenced their academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2021) as they worked to pursue skills (Muhammad, 2023) in FL.

Finding One: Children Displaying the Targeted Phonemic Awareness Skill

Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for two of the 11 first graders, Chris and Aaron, to receive scaffolded support in relation to their FLD, specifically in identifying beginning sounds, while simultaneously receiving scaffolded support in the remaining four PAS as opposed to their school district's mandated curriculum. Instead of receiving instruction in PA, Chris and Aaron's mandated FL curriculum assumed they had mastery of all five PAS, and beginning decoding skills at the start of the school year. Based on

Chris and Aaron's pre-assessment performance, Chris correctly responded to five items, demonstrating his *exploring* of the targeted skill. Aaron correctly responded to three items, demonstrating that he was *being introduced* to the targeted PAS (Table 5). They were also in the pre-alphabetic phase of word recognition at the beginning of the school year (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983).

While Chris and Aaron's school district's mandated curriculum begins unit one phonics instruction with literacy activities that require children to decode and sort two and three phoneme words in their phonics practice workbook (hmhco.com), Chris and Aaron would not have had space during the instruction to receive support in PA, which is necessary before children begin decoding words (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001). For example, the first two literacy activities required children to decode words such as "am" and "Sam" to match the picture of jam as rhyming words (hmhco.com). Instead, Chris and Aaron may have found the district's mandated phonics instruction to be challenging, which could have possibly caused them to disengage from the intended instruction. This finding examines the influence of Di•VERSE Literacy on Chris and Aaron's academic success in PA (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they pursued the skill of identifying beginning sounds in words (Muhammad, 2020, 2023).

Table 5

Identifying Beginning Sounds Pre-Assessment Performance and Scores

Children Selected Pseudonyms	Recognizing Beginning Sounds in Words (n/7)	Pre-Assessment Performance
Aaron	3	Being introduced
Chris	5	Exploring

Table 5 (cont'd)

Brittany	6	Displaying
Kevin	7	Displaying
Destiny	7	Displaying
Brianna	7	Displaying
Alvin	7	Displaying
Eli	6	Displaying
Shayla	7	Displaying
Michelle	7	Displaying
Ashley	7	Displaying

When Chris and Aaron engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, they had numerous learning opportunities that supported them in advancing their FLD in ways they may not have likely had if they engaged with their school district's mandated curriculum alone. Chris and Aaron participated in the whole group lessons, such as Playing With Familiar Sounds and reviewing the Black Language and Hip Hop ABCs during the first week of lessons on days one through three. However, there were times when they frequently observed using their listening skills by looking at the instructional slides and listening during the whole group discussions. For example, when the whole class was asked questions by Ms. Kos, their teacher, Chris and Aaron could identify the beginning sounds in some names of the illustrations on the alphabet wall cards, large posters with individual letters representing a word and image that begins with the letter's common sound, like /k/ as in *kings* (Figure 36) and /l/ as in *locs* (Figure 36) alongside their classmates.

Figure 36

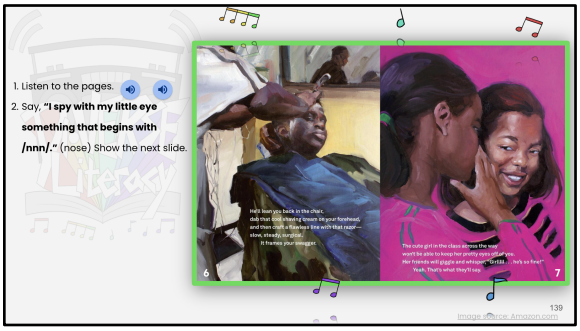
ABC Wall Cards for "K" and "L" in the Instructional Slides

However, they could not independently provide additional words that began with the same sounds when children answered questions individually.

Chris and Aaron worked on identifying the beginning sounds in words from the culturally diverse children's literature, such as *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and recognizing if the beginning sounds in two words from the texts were the same or different sounds throughout the various literacy activities that followed during the first week. Through scaffolded practice incorporated in the instructional slides, Chris and Aaron began participating more orally and observed less using their listening skills during the literacy activities, contributing to their academic growth. For example, when Ms. Kos spied with her little eye something in an illustration that began with /n/, Aaron said "none" on day five. After recognizing Aaron's response began with the same sound but was not in the illustration, Ms. Kos provided Aaron support and he recognized "nose" in the illustration on the page (Figure 37).

Figure 37

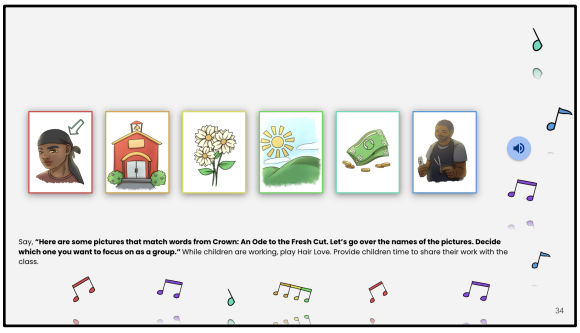
Pages from Crown in the Instructional Slides



When children worked together in twos or threes to create a tongue tickler phrase with two words that began with the same sound based on a word from *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), Chris collaborated with their classroom volunteer, Ms. Morse, and created the tongue tickler phrase, "dark do-rag," considering the do-rags in the illustrations were black on day six (Figure 38).

Figure 38

Vocabulary from Crown for Tongue Ticklers in the Instructional Slides



Chris and Aaron received more support from their teacher, Ms. Kos, to answer individual questions to be able to recognize beginning sounds in words as they progressed through the second week of Di•VERSE Literacy and a second opportunity to engage in the same literacy activities using different vocabulary from *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021). For example, when children played iSpy while listening to the text, Chris said that "the sign" in the illustration began with /s/ on day eight (Figure 39). Aaron generated the word "big" to describe the image of the

basketball in the instructional slides as a tongue tickler phrase which is two words that began with the same sound when children created tongue tickler phrases in pairs the second time on day nine (e.g. big basketball) (Figure 40).

Figure 39

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

Figure 40

Tongue Tickler Phrase Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

Chris and Aaron's level of oral participation continued to increase as they progressed through the third week of instruction. After identifying the beginning sounds in *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2021) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020) on day 12, Chris and Aaron received additional support in recognizing the beginning sounds in words with direct connections to print on day 13. For example, through scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides, their teacher, Ms. Kos, shared examples of children's self-portraits with a similar format as two children's books included in the unit and examples such as "bad buns" and "mad mushroom" (Figure 41).

Figure 41

Self-Portrait Examples Based on Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides

The examples allowed Chris and Aaron to explicitly segment and spell the beginning sounds in the phrases with direct connections to print (Ehri & McCormick, 1998) that incorporated Black Language before they created their own.

When the class read their text variation (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000), *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, Chris quietly read his page, "moon mohawk" (Figure 42), in which the class identified "/m/" as the beginning sound of his hip hairstyle and Aaron gently read his page, "rad rainbow," in which the class identified "/r/" as the beginning sound of his (Figure 43) on days 14 and 15.

Figure 42

Chris' Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

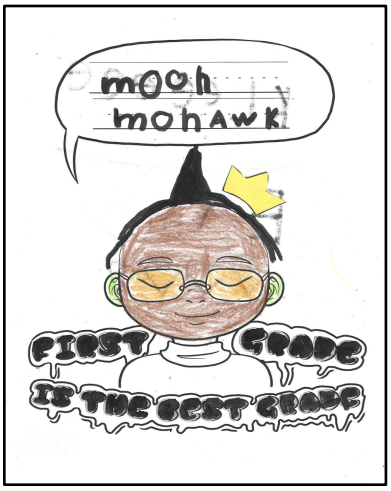
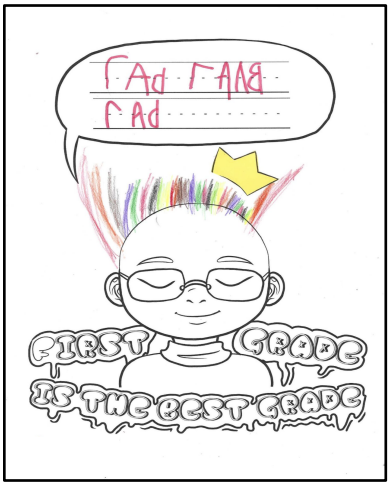


Figure 43

Aaron's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair



While Chris received support in spelling unknown spelling patterns in his phrase, Aaron used visually distinctive visual cues of letters, drawing from his funds of knowledge and developing alphabet knowledge to spell his phrase.

After children engaged in the first three weeks of Di•VERSE Literacy, I provided them with the same individual assessment for the post-assessment. At the conclusion of the study, all 11 first graders, including Chris and Aaron, correctly responded to all seven items in identifying beginning phonemes, *displaying* their understanding of the targeted PAS of the first unit of instruction (Table 6). Based on Chris and Aaron's post-assessment performance, they advanced their literacy development in the pre-alphabetic phase of word identification (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983; Maso, 1980). Although Chris and Aaron's school district's mandated curriculum assumed they had mastery of PAD and beginning decoding skills when they entered the classroom on the first day of school, Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for them to receive scaffolded support in relation to their FLD while

simultaneously receiving scaffolded support in the remaining four PAS they were *being introduced* to *display* next.

Table 6

Identifying Beginning Sounds Pre-and Post-Assessment Performance and Scores

Children Selected Pseudonyms	Recognizing Beginning Sounds in Words (n/7)	Pre-Assessment Performance	Recognizing Beginning Sounds in Words (n/7)	Post-Assessment Performance
Aaron	3	Being introduced	7	Displaying
Chris	5	Exploring	7	Displaying
Brittany	6	Displaying	7	Displaying
Kevin	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Destiny	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Brianna	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Alvin	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Eli	6	Displaying	7	Displaying
Shayla	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Michelle	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Ashley	7	Displaying	7	Displaying

Finding Two: Children Exploring the Remaining Phonemic Awareness Skills

The first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for four of the 11 first graders, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny, to review identifying beginning sounds, receive implicit or incorporated scaffolded support in the remaining four PAS, and make a direct connection between their PAD to print for beginning reading and writing development as opposed to their school district's mandated curriculum. At the beginning of the school year, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny were being introduced to most of the remaining four PAS.

Like Chris and Aaron, the four children were also in the pre-alphabetic phase of word recognition (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983).

At the same time, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny's school district's mandated curriculum assumed they had mastery of the remaining four PAS, considering one of the lessons during week one required children to write the correct word on a line that matched a provided picture by recognizing the difference in the medial vowel or the ending sound in consonant-vowel-consonant words (hmhco.com). For example, when children were provided an image of a hat, they must recognize the difference between the words "hit" and "hat" to write the correct word on the line, focusing on the medial phoneme and spelling. When children were provided the image of a bib, they must recognize the difference between the words "bib" and "bit" to write the correct word on the line, focusing on the ending phoneme and spelling. Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny would not have had space during the instruction to receive support in PA, which is necessary before they begin decoding and encoding words (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001). Like Chris and Aaron, the four children may have found the district's mandated instruction challenging, which could have possibly caused them to disengage from the instruction. This finding examines the influence of Di•VERSE Literacy on Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny's academic success in PA (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they pursued the skills (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) in the remaining four PAS through implicit or indirect instruction although it was not the explicit or targeted focus of the first unit (Table 7).

Table 7

Remaining Four Phonemic Awareness Skills Pre-Assessment Performance and Scores

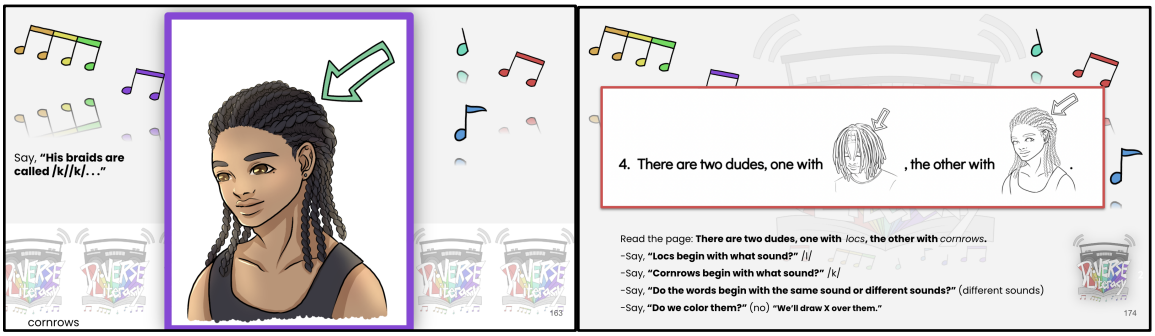
Children Selected Pseudonyms	Recognizing Ending Sounds in Words (n/7)	Recognizing Medial Sounds in Words (n/7)	Blending Sounds in Words (n/7)	Segmenting Sounds in Words (n/7)	Pre-Assessment Performance
Aaron	0	2	0	0	Being introduced
Chris	0	0	3	0	Being introduced
Brittany	0	0	1	0	Being introduced
Kevin	0	0	0	0	Being introduced
Destiny	0	1	1	1	Being introduced
Brianna	0	0	0	0	Being introduced
Alvin	0	1	6	4	Being introduced/ Exploring
Eli	5	7	7	4	Exploring/ Displaying
Shayla	5	0	7	6	Exploring/ Displaying
Michelle	6	6	4	5	Exploring/ Being introduced
Ashley	0	6	6	7	Exploring/ Displaying

When Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, they had numerous opportunities to advance their academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2021) and pursue the remaining four skills (Muhammad, 2023) in PA through implicit or indirect instruction incorporated in the first unit although it was not the targeted focus of the provided instruction. The four children participated in the same whole group lessons as Chris and Aaron through their various learning and engagement styles during the first two weeks of instruction. For example, Brittany was more vocal in responding to questions asked to the whole class throughout the three weeks of instruction, and Brianna, Destiny, and Kevin participated more when asked individual questions. When children reviewed the images for the beginning sounds

worksheet based on *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017), Brittany identified the names of the images when they reviewed them using the instructional slides provided by their teacher, Ms. Kos, and as they completed the worksheet by saying the names of the pictures (Figure 44) to fill in the sentences from the text on day five (Figure 44).

Figure 44

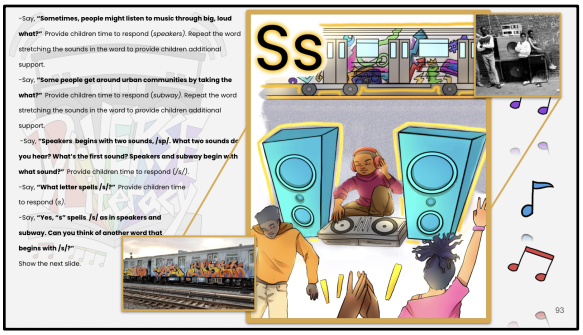
Beginning Sounds Image and Worksheet Example Based on Crown in the Instructional Slides



Destiny independently generated "soap" as another word that began with /s/ when children reviewed the alphabet wall cards hanging on the front wall of the classroom and recognized "S" spells /s/ as in subway and speakers on day three (Figure 45).

Figure 45

ABC Wall Card for "S" in the Instructional Slides



Kevin identified "the football on the boy's shirt" when he searched for something that began with /f/ when children played iSpy with *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) on day five (Figure 46).

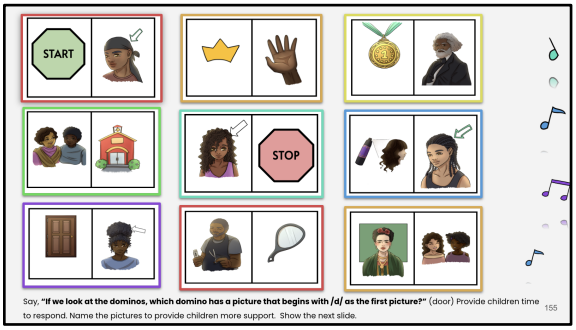
Figure 46

Pages from Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut for iSpy in the Instructional Slides

Brianna identified "door" as the name of an image that matched the domino with a do-rag, placing the domino side by side when children played the beginning sound domino game based on the language from *Crown* and *Hair Story* as a class before children played independently or with a classmate on day 11 (Figure 47). Throughout the lessons, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny engaged in a series of literacy activities that provided them space to review identifying beginning sounds in words.

Figure 47

Beginning Phoneme Dominoes in the Instructional Slides



The children also engaged in literacy activities that supported them in further developing the four remaining PAS through implicit or indirect learning opportunities incorporated in the first unit during the first two weeks of lessons. After listening to the read-alouds, *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), children received scaffolded support incorporated in the

instructional slides from their teacher, Ms. Kos, to read tongue tickler phrases using languages from the texts after listening to them a second time. When Ms. Kos introduced the tongue tickler phrases to the children, she used the cursor to slide under the two words as she blended the phonemes the letters spelled in each word. For example, children were provided the sounds in isolation or segmented the sounds in “fresh" to slide through or blend the sounds to read the word. Then, the children did the same to read “fro.” Children identified the medial and ending phonemes in words through segmentation and isolation with direct connections to print. Together, children read the tongue tickler phrase to describe Fredrick’s hair as a “fresh fro” (Figure 48). Through scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides, children received support in blending the phonemes in the words.

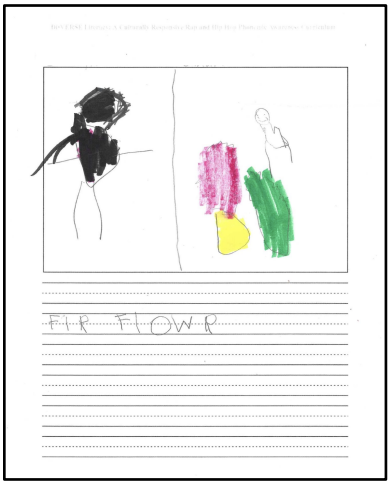
Figure 48

Tongue Tickler Phrase Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

When it was time for children to work in pairs to create their tongue tickler phrases based on language or vocabulary from the texts, they received explicit or direct support in segmenting the words they chose unless they chose to write or encode their phrases independently using inventive spelling (Meier, 2008). When Brittany and Kevin worked together to create their tongue tickler phrase based on *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), they considered “graffiti glasses" but wrote “FIR FLOWR” instead on day six (Figure 49).

Figure 49

Brittany and Kevin's Tongue Tickler Phrase from Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut



In their phrase, they used /f/ as in "fire," like their Di•VERSE Literacy alphabet wall card (Figure 50) and chart, to describe the image of flowers mentioned in the text. Additionally, they recognized "I" spelled /ī/ as the medial sound in fire and "R" spelled /r/ as the ending sound in "fire." They recognized similar features in the word "flower" as well.

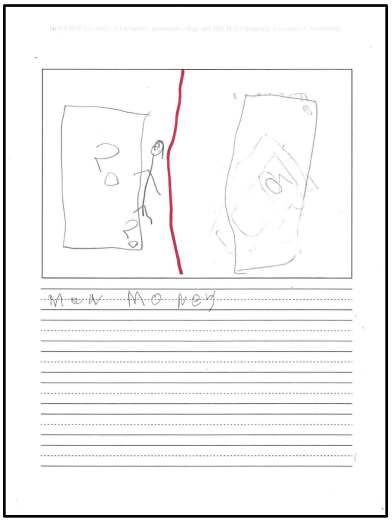
Figure 50

ABC Wall Card for "F" in the Instructional Slides

When Brianna, Destiny, and Walter worked together to create their tongue tickler phrase, they picked the same image and words with the same beginning sound but flipped the order of the words in their phrases. Brianna and Destiny wrote, "MaN MoNeY" (Figure 51) with scaffolded support in spelling.

Figure 51

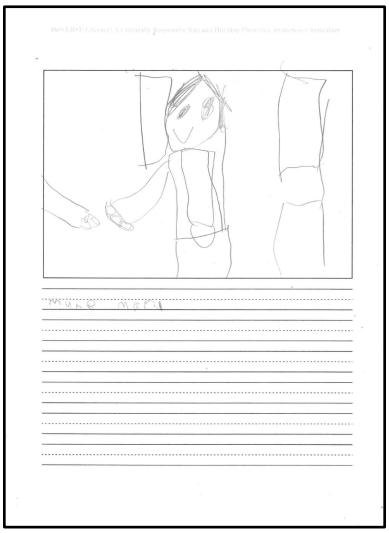
Brianna and Destiny's Tongue Tickler Phrase from Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut



Walter wrote, "mune man" using inventive spelling (Figure 52). Walter's writing demonstrates his understanding of segmenting words into individual phonemes and one to one phoneme-grapheme correspondences or letter-sound relationships.

Figure 52

Walter's Tongue Tickler Phrase from Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut



Like Brittany and Kevin, they could also use their advancing PAS (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023) to identify medial and ending phonemes in words with direct connections to print.

As children progressed through the third week of Di•VERSE Literacy, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny received similar implicit support with the four remaining PAS before they created their class text variation on day 13, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*. Through the scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides, their teacher, Ms. Kos provided examples of children's self-portraits with "bad buns" and "mad mushroom"; Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny had the opportunity to explicitly segment and spell the consonant-vowel-consonant words in the phrases (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Maso, 1980) that incorporated Black Language before they created their own. When the class read their text variation (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000), *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, Brittany read her page, "lamp loks" or lamp locs (Figure 53), in which the class identified "/l/" as the beginning sound of her hip hairstyle on days 14 and 15.

Figure 53

Brittany's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Brianna read the phrase, “pretty puffballs” (Figure 54), in which the class identified “/p/” as the beginning sound of hers.

Figure 54

Brianna’s Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Although the children were instructed to create a phrase with two words that began with the same beginning sound similar to the texts, *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2020) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2021), Kevin created the phrase and wrote, “shafl chruoos” or chef cheerios (Figure 55).

Figure 55

Kevin’s Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Destiny created the sentence,“I see to bol,” or I see the ball (Figure 56).

Figure 56

Destiny’s Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Instead of the class identifying the beginning sound in two of the words during their read-aloud, their teacher, Ms. Kos, asked the class to identify the beginning sound in “chef,” “cheerios,” and “ball” after Kevin and Destiny read their pages. By having children identify the beginning sound in the individual words Kevin and Destiny chose, children still had an opportunity to practice recognizing beginning sounds in words and Kevin and Destiny still had space to participate in the read-aloud inclusively and contribute to their class book through their print authority.

After the children engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, I provided them with the same individual assessment for the post-assessment. At the conclusion of the study, Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny advanced their academic growth in the four remaining PAS in relation to their various stages of FLD. While Kevin was still *being introduced* to the majority of the four PAS partly because he shared that he prefers “working with letters instead of sounds” during the focus group interviews, Brittany *displayed* her understanding of blending phonemes, Brianna *displayed* her understanding of segmenting phonemes, and Destiny *displayed* her understanding of identifying ending and medial phonemes, blending phonemes, and *exploring*

her understanding of segmenting phonemes. Based on Brianna, Brittany, and Kevin's post-assessment performance, they advanced their development in the pre-alphabetic phase of word identification (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983). Based on Destiny's post-assessment performance, she advanced her development to shift to the beginning stages of the partial-alphabetic phase of word identification (Maso, 1980). Although Brianna, Brittany, Kevin, and Destiny's school district's mandated curriculum assumed they had mastery of PAD and beginning decoding skills when they entered the classroom on the first day of school, Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for them to receive scaffolded and implicit or indirect support in relation to their FLD while simultaneously receiving scaffolded support with making a direct connection between the PAS they were developing to print for beginning reading and writing (Table 8).

Table 8

Remaining Phonemic Awareness Skills Pre-and Post-Assessment Performance and Scores

Children Selected Pseudonyms	End-ing Sounds in Words (n/7)	Medial Sounds in Words (n/7)	Blend-ing Sounds in Words (n/7)	Segment -ing Sounds in Words (n/7)	Pre-Assessment Perform-ance	Ending Sounds in Words (n/7)	Medial Sounds in Words (n/7)	Blending Sounds in Words (n/7)	Segmenting Sounds in Words (n/7)	Post-Assessment Perform-ance
Aaron	0	2	0	0	Being intro-duced	3	0	0	0	Being intro-duced
Chris	0	0	3	0	Being intro-duced	0	0	3	0	Being intro-duced
Brittany	0	0	1	0	Being intro-duced	4	0	6	0	Being intro-duced/ Display-ing
Kevin	0	0	0	0	Being intro-duced	2	2	4	0	Being intro-duced

Table 8 (cont'd)

Destiny	0	1	1	1	Being intro-duced	7	6	7	5	Display-ing/ Explor-ing
Brianna	0	0	0	0	Being intro-duced	4	0	4	6	Being intro-duced/ Display-ing
Alvin	0	1	6	4	Being intro-duced/ Explor-ing	7	7	7	6	Display-ing
Eli	5	7	7	4	Explor-ing/ Display-ing	7	7	7	6	Display-ing
Shayla	5	0	7	6	Explor-ing/ Display-ing	7	7	7	6	Display-ing
Michelle	6	6	4	5	Explor-ing/ Being introduc ed	7	7	7	6	Display-ing
Ashley	0	6	6	7	Explor-ing/ Display-ing	7	7	7	7	Display-ing

Finding Three: Children Displaying Beginning Decoding and Encoding Skills

Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for five of the 11 first graders, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Michelle, and Alvin to review direct connections between their PAD and print as beginning readers and writers inclusively, instead of using their phonics practice workbook that lacked cultural responsiveness during their phonics block when they entered the classroom on the first day of school. Based on their pre-assessment performance, Eli,

Ashley, Shayla, Michelle, and Alvin *displayed* their understanding of identifying beginning phonemes while *exploring* or *displaying* most of the remaining four PAS (Table 7). Additionally, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle were in various stages of directly connecting PA to print with decoding and encoding as beginning readers and writers (Table 9).

While Eli and Michelle *displayed* their understanding of beginning decoding and encoding words with two to four phonemes in Black Language or White Mainstream English, Shayla *displayed* her understanding of encoding words, and Ashley and Alvin were *being introduced* to beginning decoding and encoding words. Based on Shayla, Ashley, and Alvin's pre-assessment performance, they were in the partial-alphabetic phase of word identification (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983). Based on the Eli and Michelle's pre-assessment performance, they were in the full alphabetic phase of word identification (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Gough et al.1983). While engaging in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, the goal was for Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle to advance their academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2021) and pursue the skills (Muhammad, 2023) of the remaining four PAS, and make additional connections to decoding and encoding print as beginning readers and writers. Based on the children's pre-assessment performance, they needed minimal or some support to *display* the FLS.

Table 9

Beginning Decoding and Encoding Print Pre-Assessment Performance and Scores

Children Selected Pseudonyms	Decoding Words in Print or Reading (n/10)	Pre-Assessment Performance	Segmenting Words in Print or Spelling (n/10)	Pre-Assessment Performance
Aaron	0	Being introduced	0	Being introduced
Chris	0	Being introduced	0	Being introduced

Brittany	0	Being introduced	0	Being introduced
Kevin	8	Displaying	0	Being introduced
Destiny	3	Being introduced	0	Being introduced
Brianna	1	Being introduced	0	Being introduced
Alvin	6	Being introduced	6	Being introduced
Eli	9	Displaying	9	Displaying
Shayla	3	Being introduced	7	Displaying
Michelle	7	Displaying	7	Displaying
Ashley	0	Being introduced	0	Being introduced

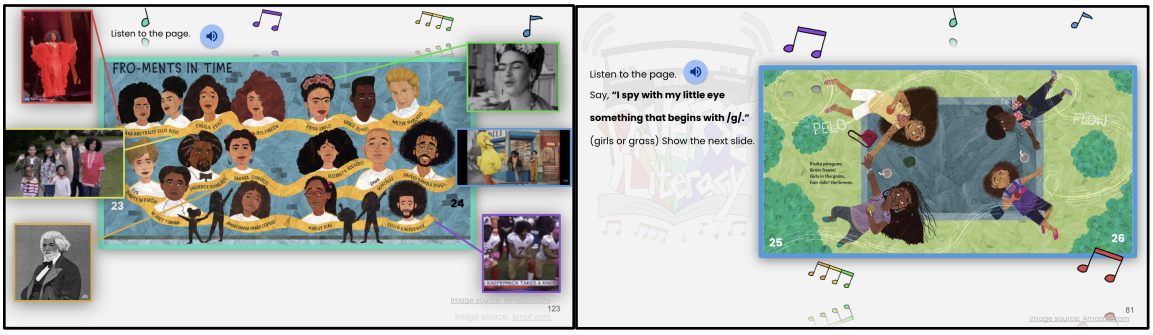
While Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle's school district's mandated curriculum continued unit one phonics instruction with literacy activities that required children to read and write sentences with the provided decodable two and three phoneme words (hmhco.com), children entered the classroom on the first day of school with most of the skills they needed to complete these activities with various levels of support from their teacher, Ms. Kos. However, the children may have possibly lost interest during the targeted phonics instruction for various reasons considering the activities lacked cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). For example, some of the activities in the school district's mandated literacy curriculum during the second week of instruction required children to fill in the missing letter-sound relationship in various places, including the first and middle, to complete the word, such as "pan" and "mop," or match decodable words to images such as a "nut" and "tub" (hmhco.com). Suppose they reviewed beginning decoding and encoding skills through their school district's mandated curriculum that lacked cultural responsiveness. In that case, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle may have disengaged with the provided instruction during the first week, which could have continued for

the three weeks of instruction included in the first unit or module (hmhco.com). This finding examines the influence of Di•VERSE Literacy on Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle academic success in PA (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they pursued the skills (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) in the remaining four PAS and beginning decoding and encoding print.

Although Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle could complete the activities with minimal or some support from their teacher, Ms. Kos, the activities lacked the meaning children expect literacy experiences to have (Hiebert, 2017; Perfetti, 2007). Instead of disengaging in their school district's mandated curriculum, the children engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy. Children were actively engaged in various ways during the three weeks of instruction. Throughout the 15 lessons, Eli, Shayla, and Alvin frequently volunteered, similar to Brittany, during the whole group instruction. They regularly answered questions Ms. Kos asked the whole class and they also volunteered to answer individual questions. Alvin regularly answered the follow-up question identifying the beginning sound in isolation when the class listened to *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and identified if two or three words from the text began with the same sounds on day four. For example, Alvin answered that "my" and "man" began with the same beginning sounds and that "/m/" was the beginning sound in the words. Shayla recognized "Frida Khalo" in the mural that celebrates cool Black, Afro-Latine, and non-Black Latine people who are known for their accomplishments and their notable hairstyles when the class listened to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) and identified beginning sounds in some of the words from the text on day seven (Figure 57). She also identified the beginning sound in Frida's name as "/f/." Eli recognized "girls" when Ms. Kos spied something with her little eye that began with /g/ when the class played iSpy as they listened to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) on day eight (Figure 57).

Figure 57

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



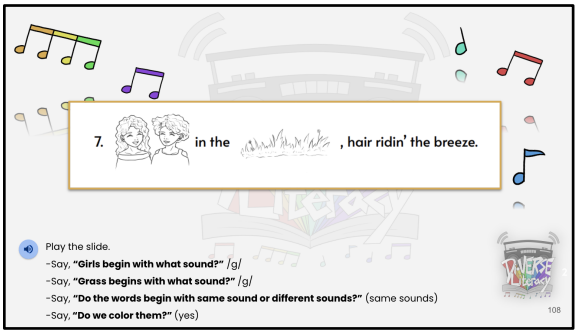
On the other hand, Ashley and Michelle's participation during whole group instruction was similar to Chris and Aaron. They regularly observed during whole group instruction and answered individual questions when called on, although they volunteered occasionally. Ashley voluntarily drew from her funds of knowledge and shared that the girl's earrings were called "hoops" and began with "/h/" spelled by "H" when the class reviewed the ABCs on day three (Figure 58). Michelle answered Ms. Kos' questions with head nods to imply if the two words began with the same or different sounds when the class completed the beginning sound worksheet based on language from *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) on day eight (Figure 59).

Figure 58

ABC Wall Card for "H" in the Instructional Slides

Figure 59

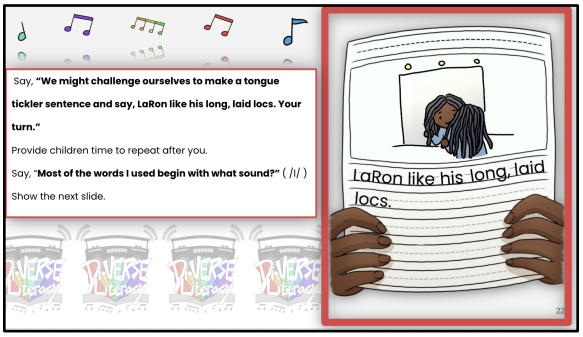
Beginning Sounds Worksheet Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle engaged in the same literacy activities as their peers, which provided them implicit or indirect support in the four remaining PAS through various learning opportunities although these skills were not the focus of the targeted instruction in the unit during the first two weeks of lessons. After receiving the same scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides from their teacher, Ms. Kos, in decoding or reading the tongue tickler phrases as their classmates, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle received additional support in reading tongue tickler sentences using their developing and advancing (Ladson-Billings, 2021) FLS with connections to print (Muhammad, 2023). For example, children read the phrases in the instructional slides "long locs," "light locs," and "laid locs" with prompting and support on day six. Then, children received support in reading the sentence, "LaRon like his long, laid locs" in Black Language, which included subject-verb agreement and Black Language vocabulary (Figure 60).

Figure 60

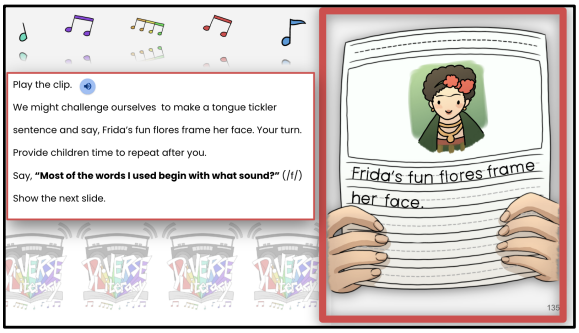
Tongue Tickler Sentence Based on Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides



Children received the same support and read the tongue tickler sentence; Frida's fun flores frame her face, which included a synonym for "flowers" in Spanish on day nine (Figure 61).

Figure 61

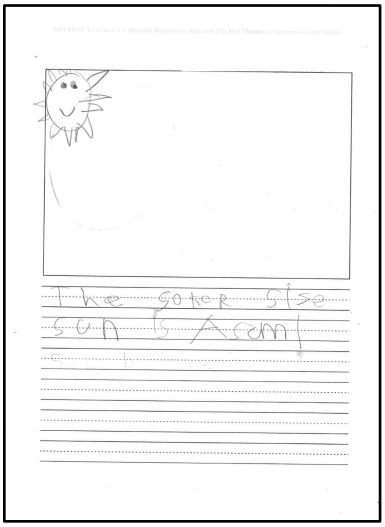
Tongue Tickler Sentence Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



After reviewing the tongue tickler sentences, their teacher, Ms. Kos, shared that they might consider challenging themselves and create a tongue tickler sentence instead of a phrase in any language they use at home or school which was incorporated in the instructional slides. When Ashley and Eli worked together using *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), they came up with, "The soker size sun is Asam!" or The soccer size sun is awesome on day six (Figure 62)—instead of creating a phrase with two words that begin with /s/, Ashley and Eli challenged themselves to include three words with the same beginning sound once they decided to focus on the provided illustration of the sun or sunrise in the instructional slides.

Figure 62

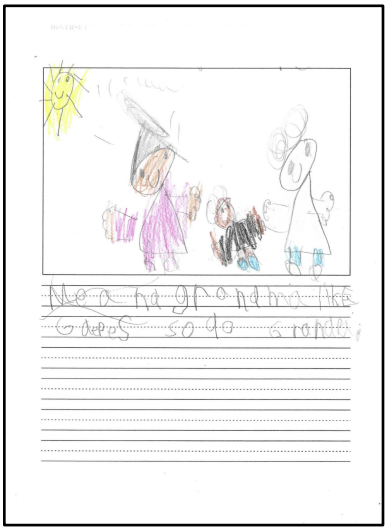
Ashley and Eli's Tongue Tickler Sentence from Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut



When Eli chose to challenge himself to create a tongue tickler sentence independently using the text *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), he wrote, "Grandma like gaepes so do grandpa" or Grandma like grapes so do grandpa on day nine (Figure 63).

Figure 63

Eli's Tongue Tickler Sentence from Hair Story



Instead of challenging themselves to create a tongue tickler sentence like Eli, Ashley, Shayla, and Michelle created a tongue tickle phrase independently. Ashley wrote, “dol prin dollar” or doll princess dollar (Figure 64). Shayla wrote, “hrt hanD” or heart hand (Figure 65), and Michelle wrote, “Hrt HAnd says HAY” or heart hand says hey (Figure 66).

Figure 64

Ashley’s Tongue Tickler Phrase from Hair Story

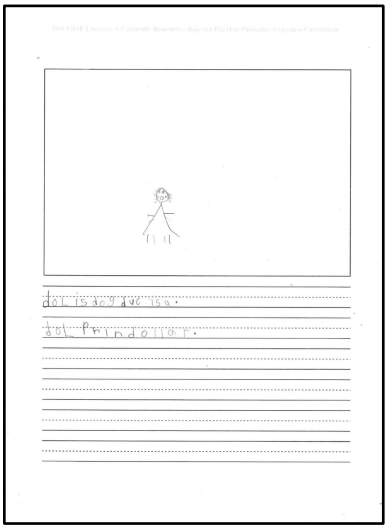


Figure 65

Shayla’s Tongue Tickler Phrase from Hair Story

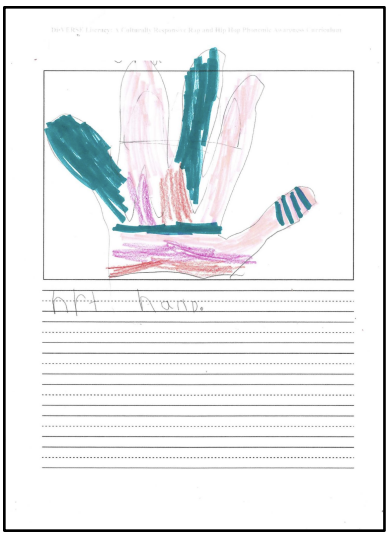


Figure 66

Michelle's Tongue Tickler Phrase from Hair Story

Through their tongue tickler sentences, Ashley and Eli had space to practice beginning decoding and encoding using sentences that incorporated Black Language and exposure to Spanish in addition to White Mainstream English. By independently creating their tongue tickler phrases, Ashley, Shayla, and Michelle took on more autonomy than the previous week when they worked with a partner which continued to advance their academic growth (Ladson-Billings, 2021) in their developing FLS (Muhammad, 2023). Through these experiences, their decoding and encoding instruction was not limited to White Mainstream English, such as the inane sentences in the school district's mandated curriculum (e.g. I have a bit of it.).

As children progressed through the third week of Di•VERSE Literacy, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and Michelle received minimal support with the four remaining PAS and beginning encoding before they created their class text variation on day 13, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*. In addition to the scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides, their teacher, Ms. Kos provided examples of children's self-portraits with "bad buns" and "mad mushroom" that included consonant-vowel-consonant words for Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Alvin, and

Michelle to have the opportunity to explicitly segment and spell more advanced spelling patterns covered in many first grade phonics scope and sequences such as /sh/ and /oo/ as in moon like mushroom (eleducation.com, greatfirsteight.org). They also received scaffolded instruction incorporated in the instructional slides in decoding the phrases “hip hijab” and “wet waves” (Figure 67) which included more advanced spelling patterns as examples (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998).

Figure 67

Self-Portrait Examples Based on Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides

When the class read their text variation (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000), *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, Eli read his page, “chikin wings church” or chicken wings church (Figure 68), in which the class identified “/ch/” as the beginning sound of his hip hairstyle, and Ashley read her page, “best braids” (Figure 69), in which the class identified “/b/” as the beginning sound of hers on days 14 and 15.

Figure 68

Eli's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Figure 69

Ashley's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

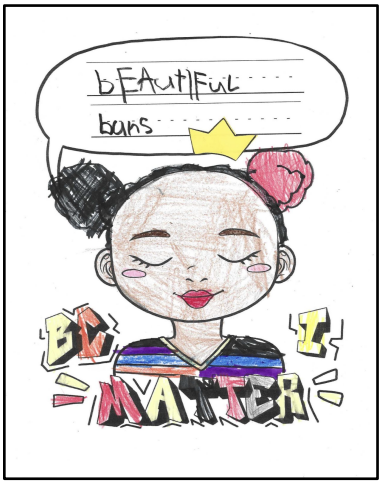
While Shayla's self-portrait included the phrase, "pink pufbols" or pink puffballs (Figure 70), Michelle's self-portrait included the phrase, "beautiful buns" (Figure 71). She also added details to her buns to represent the texture of her hair.

Figure 70

Shayla's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Figure 71

Michelle's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair



Alvin decided to challenge himself and created the sentence, "Iamabobshop boss" or I am a barbershop boss (Figure 72).

Figure 72

Alvin's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

After the children engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, I provided them with the same individual assessment for the post-assessment. At the conclusion of the study, Eli, Ashley, Shayla, and Michelle decoded and encoded eight to ten words with two to four phonemes in Black Language or White Mainstream English, *displaying* their understanding of beginning reading and writing skills. While Alvin was *displaying* his understanding of beginning decoding, he was *exploring* his understanding of beginning encoding. Based on the children's post-assessment performance, they advanced their development in the full-alphabetic phase of word identification to shift to the consolidated-alphabetic phase (Ehri & McCormick, 1998; Frith, 1985; Juel, 1983). Although Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Michelle, and Alvin's school district's mandated curriculum included instruction for them to practice beginning decoding and encoding sentences in White Mainstream English or academic language (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Souto-Manning et al., 2022), the instruction lacked cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Paris & Alim, 2014). This could have led them to possibly disengage with the intended provided instruction.

Instead of using their phonics practice workbooks during their phonics block when they entered the classroom on the first day of school, Di•VERSE Literacy created space during phonics instruction for Eli, Ashley, Shayla, Michelle, and Alvin to review making direct connections between their PAD and print as beginning readers and writers more inclusively as they simultaneously advanced their academic growth in FLS (Table 10).

Table 10

Beginning Decoding and Encoding Print Pre-and Post-Assessment Performance and Scores

Children Selected Pseudonyms	Decod-ing Words in Print or Reading (n/10)	Pre-Assessment Perform-ance	Segmenting Words in Print or Spelling (n/10)	Pre-Assessment Performanc e	Decoding Words in Print or Reading (n/10)	Post-Assessment Perform-ance	Segmenting Words in Print or Spelling (n/10)	Post-Assessment Performance
Aaron	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being introduced
Chris	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being introduced

Table 10 (cont'd)

Brittany	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being introduced
Kevin	8	Display -ing	0	Being intro-duced	9	Display-ing	0	Being introduced
Destiny	3	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	4	Being intro-duced	2	Being introduced
Brianna	1	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	7	Explor-ing	6	Being introduced
Alvin	6	Being intro-	6	Being intro-	9	Display-ing	7	Exploring

		duced		duced				
Eli	9	Display-ing	9	Display-ing	10	Display-ing	10	Displaying
Shayla	3	Being intro-duced	7	Display-ing	8	Display-ing	9	Displaying
Michelle	7	Display-ing	7	Display-ing	8	Display-ing	8	Displaying
Ashley	0	Being intro-duced	0	Being intro-duced	9	Display-ing	9	Displaying

The first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy created space during FLI for children who self-identified as Black, and People of Color with equitable educational learning opportunities that ensured that they attained the same educational goals fairly and successfully in PA in various ways as opposed to traditional FLI (Gay, 2023; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013). As a strength and asset-based curriculum, Di•VERSE Literacy also provided children who would have likely experienced challenges with their school district's mandated literacy curriculum with opportunities for success. Instead of assuming children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color entered the classroom on the first day of school with mastery of PAD, and beginning decoding or encoding skills as first graders like their school district's mandated curriculum, Di•VERSE Literacy avoided these assumptions which allowed children to participate in various ways that were aligned to their literacy development as opposed to engaging in a curriculum that assumes they developed skills they might not have fully developed.

Additionally, Di•VERSE Literacy provided children who already fully developed the PAS with new learning opportunities rather than engaging in instruction that was limited to reviewing these skills alone in their school district's mandated literacy curriculum. Based on the

children's pre-and post-assessment performance, children who participated in Di•VERSE Literacy made more significant gains in PA with explicit connections to print by being placed at the center of instruction and including their lived and language experiences during FL instead of traditional FLI that centers Whiteness in the science of reading as a result of systemic racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020).

CHAPTER 5 - CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES WITH DI•VERSE LITERACY

To provide children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with an equitable educational foundation, I designed the first Di•VERSE Literacy unit so that children could have access to "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). Additionally, I designed the first Di•VERSE Literacy unit to be inclusive of their identities and lived experiences that are culturally and racially influenced while simultaneously advancing their academic success in PA (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). By having access to "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) during FLI, children had space to see their multilayered identities and cultures honored and embraced in ways that reflect societal diversity more justly. To examine children's experiences with culturally relevant FLI, I asked the following research question: How do children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color experience Di•VERSE Literacy? In response to this study's second research question, I examined children's experiences engaging with the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy by analyzing: the video and audio recordings of the lessons; my informal observations of the lessons; my researcher analytical memos; children's artifacts; children's individual reflections; and children's focus group interviews.

Finding One: Examining Children's Cultural Competence and Pursuit of Identity

All Di•VERSE Literacy lessons began with an opportunity for children to see themselves and others before they engaged with explicit or direct literacy content during the provided instruction to support children in understanding who they are and who others are with whom they share the world (Bishop, 1990; Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). By incorporating "mirrors" and "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1), children had space to make meaning of their identities, their

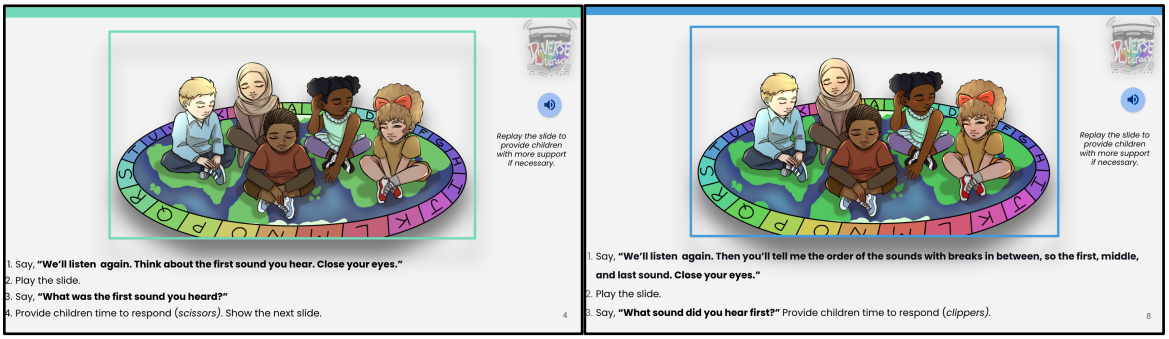
classmates' identities, and the identities of others in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) before they engaged in the scaffolded literacy content. When children saw themselves and others, they had space to see their histories, cultures, music, and art forms (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018) in the classroom, which has been historically missing, providing children with a sense of belonging (Bishop, 1990; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022) in various ways during the three weeks of instruction. This finding examines children's experiences advancing their cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they were in the pursuit of identity (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) while engaging with the first Di•VERSE Literacy unit.

Children's Experiences Findings Mirrors

One way children who self-identify as Black and Arab experienced a sense of belonging while engaging in the Di•VERSE Literacy unit was by seeing and hearing themselves in the classroom with ties to their families and communities (Bishop, 1990; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022) while drawing from their funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) to experience a sense of belonging. During the first week, children engaged in the activity, Playing With Familiar Sounds on days one and two. Before children engaged in the scaffolded literacy instruction, children first listened to the three familiar sounds associated with Di•VERSE Literacy unit (and future units) themes, including the barbershop, the beauty salon, urban intensive cities, and playgrounds or parks in those urban communities. After identifying the three sounds, children used them to practice the five PAS as an introduction to the literacy content as scaffolded instruction (Figure 73). Then, children identified a place in their community where they might hear the three familiar sounds.

Figure 73

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides



For example, Michelle associated the sounds of the blow dryer, hair washing in a sink or bowl, and hair spray with her "home," considering her "mom and auntie do her hair" there, while Ashley associated the sounds with a "hair salon" (Figure 74). During the focus group interview, when Brittany reflected on her experience playing with familiar sounds, she added that the same three sounds made her "think about her mom when she washes her hair [along] with shampoo." Another child, Eli, associated the sounds of the clippers, scissors, and chatter with the "barbershop" and also recognized the gifs from *Barbershop* and *Coming to America* as "barbershop movies" (Figure 74). The next day, Eli also associated the sounds of a siren, a fast car, and Hip Hop music with his urban city's "downtown." During the focus group interview, when Michelle reflected on her experience playing with familiar sounds, she added that "the fast car sound [reminded her of her] dad whenever [they] drove downtown" (Figure 74).Through Michelle, Ashley, Brittany, and Eli's responses, they made connections between their identities and lived experiences as children who self-identify as Black living in an urban intensive community (Milner, 2012) and the Di•VERSE Literacy unit by seeing and hearing themselves in the classroom with ties to their families and communities (Bishop, 1990; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Figure 74

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides

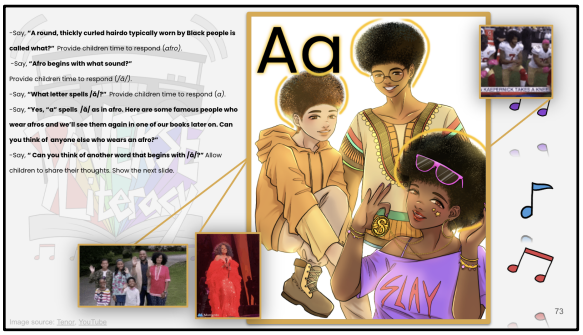
Children continued making connections between their identities and lived experiences and Di•VERSE Literacy while seeing themselves represented through the ABC wall cards and alphabet charts on the same days, in addition to day three. When children were first introduced to each alphabet wall card in the instructional slides, children identified the name of the image. For example, when children saw the first wall card on day one, they were asked, "A round, thickly curled hairdo typically worn by Black people is a what?", while seeing an illustration of a Black woman and two Black men, one in a dashiki, with afros celebrating and embracing their cultural pride (Travis, 2013). Once children identified the hairstyle as an afro, they identified the beginning sound of the word as /ă/ and the name of the letter spelling the sound was "a."

Children expanded their developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) by making additional connections between the ABCs and their identities and lived experiences with ties to the past and present (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) on days two and three. When children

reviewed the alphabet wall cards a second time on these days, they saw many of the illustrations alongside photographs, videos, and gifs to provide children with various cultural references to include children's histories and traditions while reviewing alphabet knowledge or phoneme-grapheme correspondences (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). For instance, when children saw the wall card for "a," the illustration was accompanied by gifs, of Diana Ross, Tracee Ellis Ross, and Colin Kaepernick (Figure 75).

Figure 75

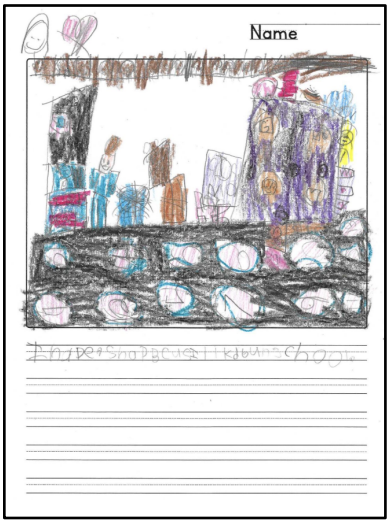
ABC Wall Card for "A" in the Instructional Slides



Then the children were asked if they knew anyone else who wore an afro. Alvin said, "my mom." Shayla said that "[her] hair was an afro when [her] mom took her hair down," when she shared her thoughts about the ABCs during the focus group interview. When Alvin reflected on his thoughts about the ABCs during the focus group interview, he also made a similar connection and shared that "they made [him] think of [his] mom and dad." Additionally, Alvin included the ABC wall cards in his drawing of himself in his classroom during phonics time in his individual reflection that he colored with a brown crayon (Figure 76), further recognizing how the ABCs incorporated people from communities of Color provided him a mirror of himself, his family, and his communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Figure 76

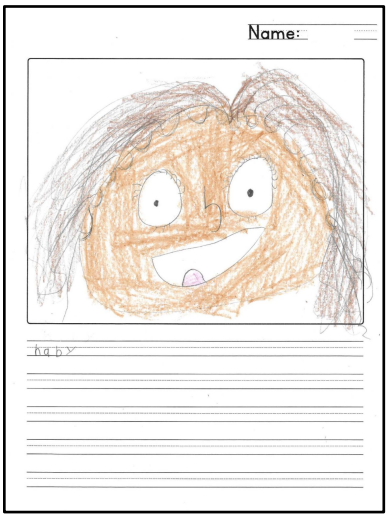
Alvin's Week One Individual Reflection



While the letter "A" provided Shayla and Alvin with "mirrors," other letters provided their classmates with "mirrors" as well (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). When Ashley reflected on how she felt during phonics time reviewing the ABCs, she said "happy" (Figure 77).

Figure 77

Ashley's Week One Individual Reflection



During the focus group interview, she pointed to her favorite illustrations using the alphabet chart. She shared that she was happy because "[she] liked them," gently smiling and pointing to all the ones with Black girls and women.

Michelle pointed to "M" and "y," which also included Black women and girls because those made her think about her "mommy," and Destiny pointed to "E" because she liked the culturally diverse group of "fans cheering" for Queen Bey. When the class reviewed the letter "o," Brianna shared that she has "a children's book about [former President Obama] at home," and Eli shared "he saw [him] before on TikTok." Kevin shared that he liked "t," considering the Black guy that's deejaying had "twists like [his] dad." Eli and Kevin liked "g," but for different reasons. While the man of Color with a grill in the illustration reminded Kevin of "[his] favorite rapper, NLE Choppa," Eli shared that the illustration of the man, the ode to Basquiat, spray painting graffiti "reminded [him] of the times when [he] saw people painting and coloring art on walls in [his city]." Eli and Shayla also liked "d," but for different reasons. While Eli liked dab, a Hip Hop dance, which he excitedly demonstrated while rising to his knees when he was sitting on the classroom carpet, Shayla and Alvin liked dap, a handshake designed by Black soldiers to represent their solidarity while in the Vietnam War (Hamilton, 2018), and the opportunity to create their own handshake, demonstrating how each generation moves the dap forward (Hamilton, 2018) during FLI which they provided each other a few more times during the week (Figure 78).

Figure 78

ABC Wall Card for "D" in the Instructional Slides

Many children, like Eli and Shayla, knew many of the illustrations and vocabulary centering communities of Color from historically marginalized communities for the ABCs (Figure 79) which allowed them to continue to see themselves in the classroom with ties to their families and communities as they drew from their funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) and experienced a sense of belonging in their classroom (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Figure 79

Children's Alphabet Chart

Children like Kevin and Eli continued finding their "mirrors" through the art form of culturally diverse children's literature (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023), specifically through the text, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) during the first and leading into the second week of instruction on days three through six (Figure 80). Before children were first introduced to the text on day four, children listened to an audio recording of my explanation of the Di•VERSE Literacy unit theme. In the recording, I read:

> On the first day of school, we entered our classroom as *kings* and *queens*. While some royals wear crowns, we wear our crowns through our hair. Some of us like to wear our hair long, short, or somewhere in between. Some of us like to wear our hair up, down, or free. Sometimes, we might add bows, bobos, and designs. We can style our hair ourselves, our families style our hair for us, or our barbers and hairstylists style our hair for us, too! When our crowns are styled, and we look in the mirror, we feel 'magnificent, flawless, like royalty,' like the boy in our story when he visits the barbershop and gets a fresh cut that makes him feel like a *king* (Barnes, 2017, p. 26).

Figure 80

Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides

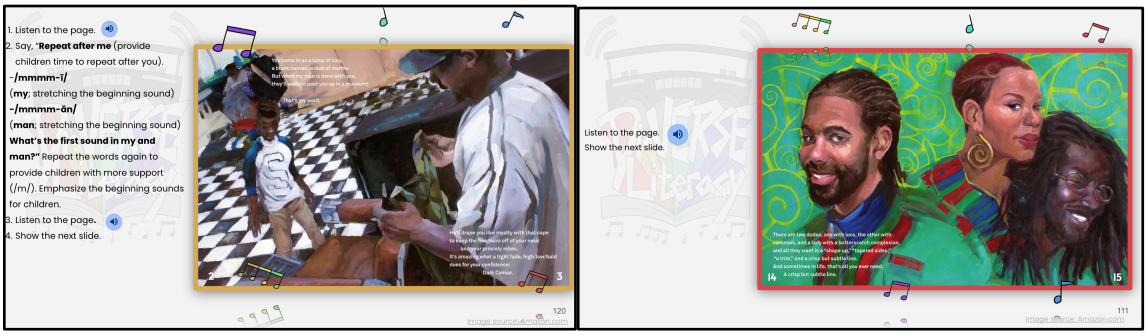
Through the introduction, children had space to begin disturbing the gap between the history they learn at school and the history they learn from their families and communities about their ancestors (Patterson & Shuttleworth, 2019; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Additionally, the

introduction (re)directed children's attention to the crown template similar to Hip Hop's artist, Basquiat's (1984), from the letter "G" from the ABC wall card while seeing a similar crown on the cover of *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) to continue reminding children *who* and *whose* they are in the world while practicing self-love and embracing their cultural pride.

Next, children listened to the story in its entirety, which provided the class space to make meaning of the text, incorporating characters with a lived experience that was culturally and racially influenced using their funds of knowledge, developing comprehension skills, and cultural competence. After listening to the text, children answered a few questions to check their understanding and made connections to the text. Eli shared that "the boy's crown in the story was his hair," and "he went to the barbershop." Kevin added that "the boy got a haircut" while there and Shayla added that "he was happy" once his crown was styled. Then, children listened to the text a second time, identifying the beginning sounds in some words to engage in scaffolded literacy instruction incorporated into instructional slides (Opitz, 2000). For example, after listening to the second page, children repeated the single-syllable words, "my" and "man," which referred to the boy's barber in Black Language, then identified the beginning sound in the words as /m/ (Figure 81).

Figure 81

Pages from Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides



Children engaged in additional FL activities, extending the language and experiences in *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) while making connections to the activities they engaged in previously on prior days of instruction on days five and six. After engaging with the text three times, followed by various literacy activities, Kevin shared "[he] liked it when the boy got a haircut," making a connection between "the fifty or one hundred times [he has] been to the barbershop" during the focus group interview. He added that when he gets a new or fresh cut, like the boy in the story, "[he] feels happy, too." *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) also provided Chris space to see himself as well. He also shared that the text "made [him] feel happy" during the focus group interview. Chris went on to add that "[he has] been going to the barbershop since he was a baby," recognizing parallels between his lived experiences and those incorporated in the text (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Eli thought the book and activities were "kinda fun because [he] never heard the book before." Even though it was "kinda fun," he also recognized parallels between his lived experiences and the text by recalling the one time "[he] went to the barbershop with [his] uncle when [he] had braids." He then noted "[he] missed [his] afro," which was longer than his current hair style.

Other children in the class continued finding their "mirrors" like Shayla, Brittany, Brianna, and Destiny through the art form of culturally diverse children's literature, specifically, *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) (Figure 82), as they progressed through the second week of instruction on days seven through nine (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Figure 82

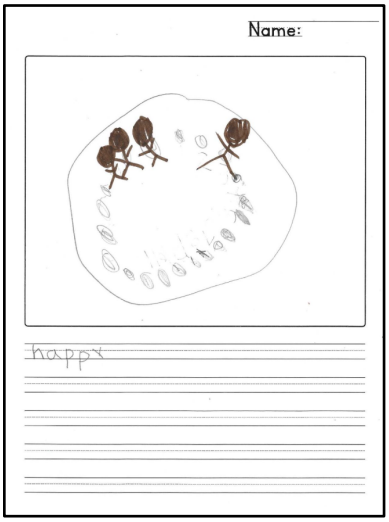
Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

While the introduction to the unit theme recognized some children as *kings* on day four and it also recognized some children as *queens* to continue reminding more children *who* and *whose* they are in the world while practicing self-love (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2019; Muhmmad, 2023), contributing to their developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 2021, 1995) and their pursuit of identify (Muhammad 2020, 2023). Children followed the same routine and literacy activities as they did with *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) but with *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), which centered the lived experiences of Black and Brown girls' hair over three days of instruction during week two.

Shayla shared that "[she] thought the story was good" at the end of the lesson after listening to the read-aloud for the first time on day seven. During the focus group interview, she shared that "[she] liked the story" again. Shayla added "[she] felt happy during phonics," learning along with her classmates, "Michelle, Destiny, and Brianna," who she included in her individual reflection, sitting near her on their classroom carpet (Figure 83).

Figure 83

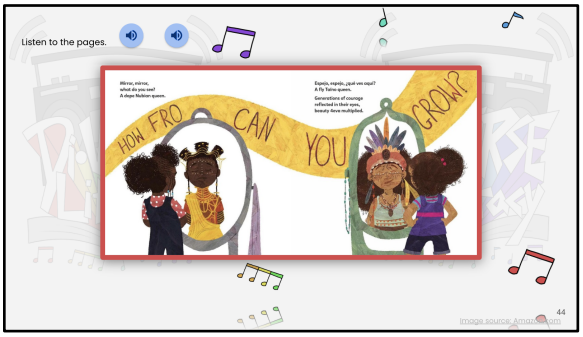
Shayla's Week One Individual Reflection



While pointing to the Black girl on the book cover of *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), Shayla then added, "She looks like me because we have the same skin color," recognizing parallels between her identity and the text, experiencing a sense of belonging (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). Destiny thought *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) "was good," too, because "[she] gets her done" like the girls in the text. When she wears braids, "[her] mom's friend does them." Brittany shared "[she] liked the page with the girls looking in the mirror and saying mirror, mirror on the wall," highlighting and recognizing Ramos' (2021) culturally and racially influenced twist on the classical fairytale line (Figure 84). Brittany added that "[she] would still like to read [the text] again" after listening to the text for three days of instruction. Although Brianna heard the text enough between days seven and eight, she shared during the focus group interview that "[the text] made [her] think of [her] hair" and how she might "wear different styles like the girls" in the story, finding her "mirrors" like some of her classmates (Bishop, 1990, p. 1).

Figure 84

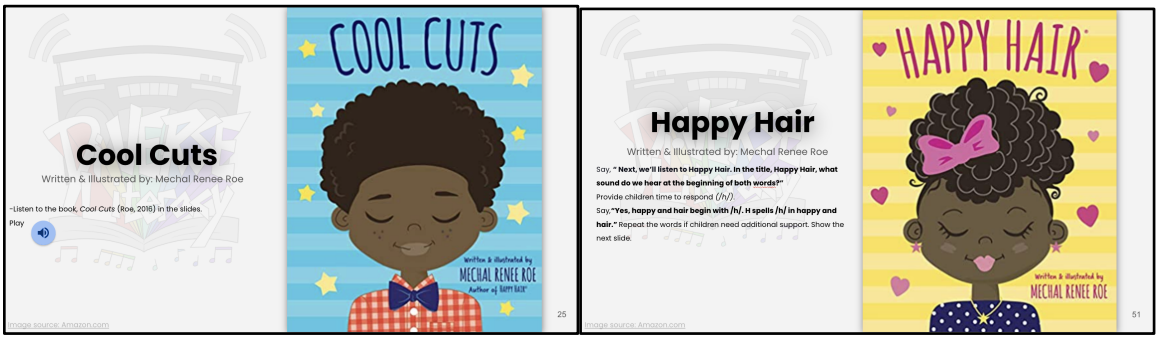
Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



Similar to *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2021) (Figure 85) and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020) (Figure 85) continued providing some of the same children with "mirrors" like Shayla, Destiny, and Brianna while providing "mirrors" to other children in the class like Ashley (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). Children followed the same routine when they were first introduced to a children's book by listening to the text in its entirety before engaging in scaffolded instruction utilizing the text so that they could continue seeing themselves and others before engaging in explicit or direct literacy instruction on day twelve, during the third week of instruction (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Figure 85

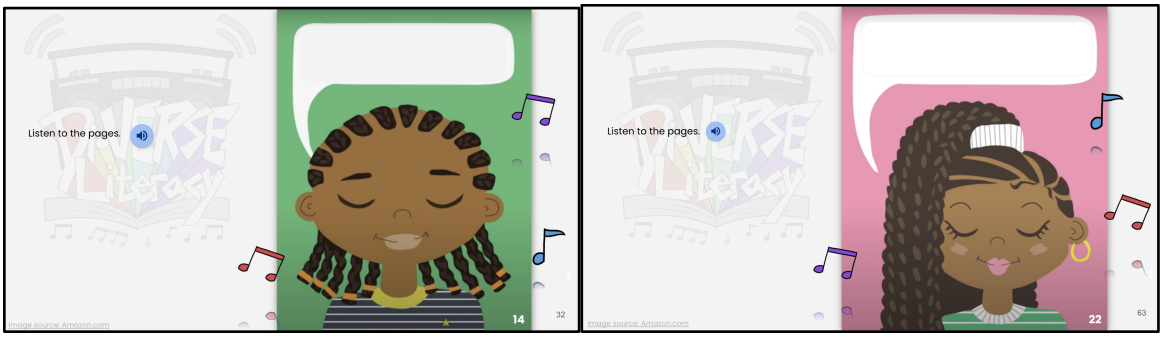
Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



Once children listened to *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2021) in its entirety, Shayla said "[she] love[d] cornrows" (Figure 86) and sometimes wore them to school. Brianna made connections to the text and shared that the kids in the book hair was "like [her] hair," referring to the kid with a full fro. Ashley added that "[she] liked both books, [especially] the cute braids and curls" which were the same as her current hairstyle (Figure 86). Through the four texts written by authors of Color utilizing their cultural styles and languages (Ladson-Billings, 1994), children in the class had space during FLI to see themselves, including their histories, cultures, and art forms (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Figure 86

Pages from Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Instructional Slides



Children saw themselves through the culturally diverse children's literature included in the unit. Some children also had space to hear themselves through the art form of rap and Hip Hop music (Hill, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Love, 2015). At the end of most lessons, beginning on day four, children listened to the song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, based on the four culturally diverse children's books in the unit. As children listened to the song, there was a section that incorporated the Black Language feature, call and response (Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 2022, 1977), for children to identify the beginning sound in the hip hairstyle name consisting of two words (e.g. /f/ for fab fro). When the children heard the song the first time, Kevin began dancing in his seat as soon as the beat dropped, and Michelle joined in shortly after,

dancing along in her spot on the classroom carpet. During the focus group interview, Brittany said, “I liked the music, and my hands were swinging,” demonstrating how she danced to the music (Figure 87).

Figure 87

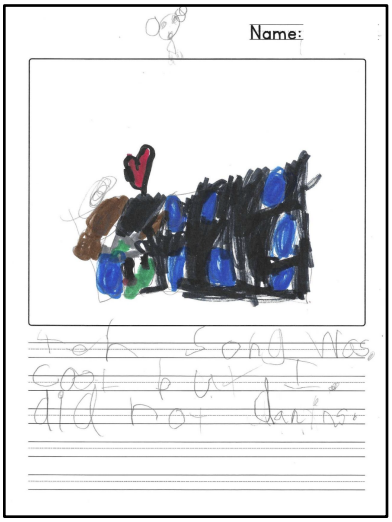
Brittany’s Week One Individual Reflection

She added that “[she] could hear some of the rhyming words in the song,” demonstrating how music that parallels children’s Hip Hop identities in school can simultaneously support their phonological development in a culturally familiar way.

The children's enthusiasm for listening to the Hip Hop song was apparent in their responses during the focus group interview after day four of the curriculum. Kevin added that “[he] liked the song too, [especially] the beat,” and asked if “[they could] listen to it again” during the first focus group interview after days one through four. Michelle also shared that “[she] thought the song was good because she liked the beat.” While Eli said, “The song was cool, but [he] didn’t dance (Figure 88),” Shayla gave the song a thumbs up when I asked her what she thought about it.

Figure 88

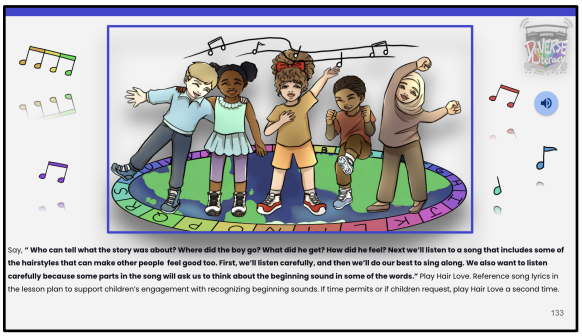
Eli's Week One Individual Reflection



Aaron pointed and asked their teacher, Ms. Kos, while looking at the instructional slide with the song that showed a small group of children with identities that reflect Black, Brown, People of Color, and White, some with stylish kicks or sneakers and sitting on a classroom carpet, "Is that us?," noticing parallels between the children's identities and experiences incorporated in the instructional slide and his first grade class (Figure 89), on day seven.

Figure 89

Cool Cuts Happy Hair Rap and Hip Hop Song in the Instructional Slides



By hearing themselves through rap and Hip Hop music, some children had space to find their "mirrors" through the art forms of music, contributing to their developing cultural competence

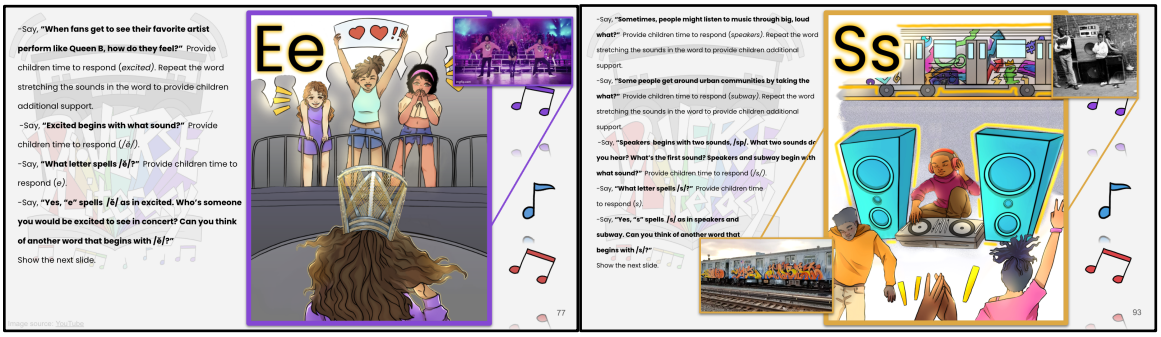
(Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) while they were in the pursuit of their identity in the classroom (Muhammad, 2020, 2023).

Children's Experiences Findings Windows

While some children made connections between their identities and lived experiences and Di•VERSE Literacy by seeing themselves represented through "mirrors," some children made connections between the identities and lived experiences of their classmates and the curriculum through "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). When children experience "windows" before engaging in literacy content, children see others with whom they share the world and develop respect for diverse communities who experience the word differently than they do (Bishop, 1990; Knight-Manuel & Marciano, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2021, 1995; Muhammad, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). For instance, many of the ABC wall cards provided children like Simone and Walter, who self-identified as Arab, with windows into the identities and experiences of many of their classmates who self-identified as Black. As Walter became more familiar with the Black Language and Hip Hop vocabulary terms for the ABC wall cards, he made connections between his identities and experiences and the identities and experiences incorporated in the ABCs. For example, Walter shared that he would be excited to see his favorite YouTuber like the fans seeing Queen Bey when the class went over the letter "E" on day two (Figure 90). Additionally, some alphabet wall cards provided many of the children in the class with "windows" into the identities and experiences of other children with whom they share the world (Bishop, 1990, p.1). When children went over the letter "s," children recognized the illustration of a deejay's big loud speakers, but did not recognize the subway spray painted with graffiti on day one (Figure 90).

Figure 90

ABC Wall Card for "E" and "S" in the Instructional Slides



Instead of using the word, "subway," Shayla called it a "train," drawing from her funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994). Although people in Shayla's urban intensive community (Milner, 2020) do not commute daily using a subway, the illustration provided Shayla and her classmates a "window" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) into the experience of children who live in other urban intensive communities (Milner, 2012) like Chicago and New York. Shayla added this new experience to her developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) and recalled the term when they reviewed the ABCs on day three. When the class reviewed the letter "h," children identified the girl's hoodie, headphones, and hoop earrings. Ms. Kos shared with the class that the girl was wearing a hijab, although no one in their class wore one (Figure 90). By recognizing how others with whom they share the world wear their hair and commute, children had opportunities to see others in "culturally and racially just ways" respectfully (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) during FLI before explicitly or directly engaging in the content.

Considering children enter the classroom with a multiplicities of identities and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2014) and the Black experience is not monolithic (Adichie, 2009), children in the class who self-identified as Black had space during instruction to recognize additional identities and experiences of the Black community in "culturally and racially just ways" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). When the class reviewed the letter "o," which included an

illustration of Hip Hop's president, Barack Obama, reading a children's book to a group of children with a deejaying octopus on the page, Aaron excitedly whispered and gently exclaimed, "AYE, Eli, that's you!," as he pointed to the back of one of the children's heads with a hairstyle similar to Eli's on day three (Figure 91). After shifting Eli's attention to the letter "O" wall card, specifically, the kid to the left in the yellow t-shirt sitting on the carpet listening to Obama in the instructional slide (Figure 91), Eli provided Aaron with a nonverbal gesture of agreement in Black Language (Meier, 2008; Mufwene et al., 2022) by touching the back of his head, recognizing the similarities.

Figure 91

ABC Wall Card for "H" and "O" in the Instructional Slides

Aaron continued finding "windows" into the identities and experiences of his peers as the children continued to review the wall cards a second time (Bishop, 1990, p.1). When children were thinking of other words that began with /m/ (Figure 92), Aaron interjected, "Okay, so whose name begins with /m/ in our class?" Children in class responded, "Michelle." Once Aaron made this connection between his classmate's name and the ABCs, other children did the same. After recognizing Hip Hop has influenced people all over the world for the letter "w," Brittany recognized Walter's name began with /w/ and Brianna added that "[her] last name began with the same sound, too" (Figure 92).

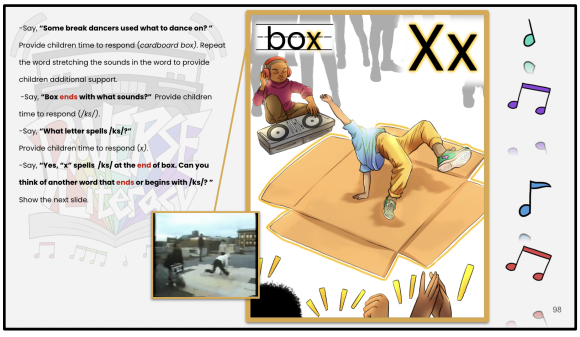
Figure 92

ABC Wall Card for "M" and "W" in the Instructional Slides

After recognizing some breakdancers used a cardboard box to dance on and end in /ks/ for the letter "x," Eli recognized "[his] last name ended in /ks/" as well (Figure 93). While the ABCs provided some children like Simone, Walter, and Aaron, with "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p.1) and an opportunity to respectfully and genuinely see some of the identities and experiences of their classmates (Gay, 2000, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Love, 2015; Muhammad, 2023; Noguera, 2003; Paris & Alim, 2014), they also provided children in the class with opportunities to see the experiences of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color living in urban intensive communities (Milner, 2012) across the United States.

Figure 93

ABC Wall Card for "X" in the Instructional Slides

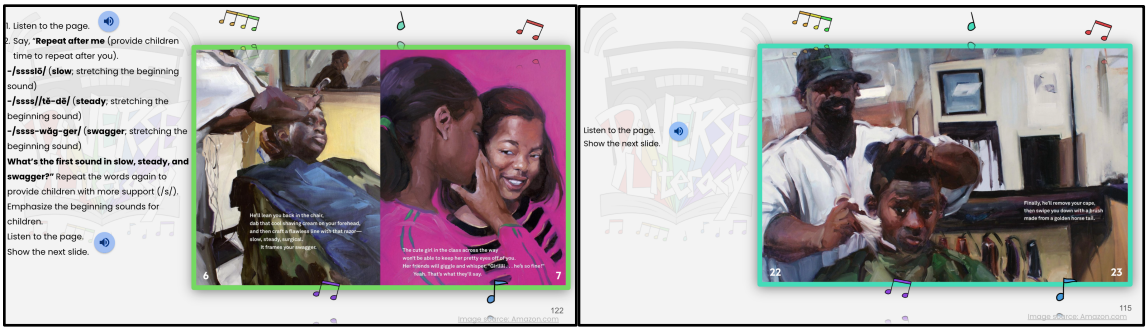


When children listened to the read-aloud, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017), children like Shayla, Michelle, Destiny, and Brittany had the opportunity to advance their

developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) by looking through "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) into the experiences of some of their peers (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) during the first and leading into the second week of instruction on days three through six. Shayla shared that she thought "the book was good [and that her] dad went to the barbershop," during the focus group interview. Michelle shared that she thought "the book was good," too. Specifically, Destiny's favorite page was with "the girls whispering" how fine the boy looked after getting his cut (Figure 94).

Figure 94

Pages from Crown in the Instructional Slides



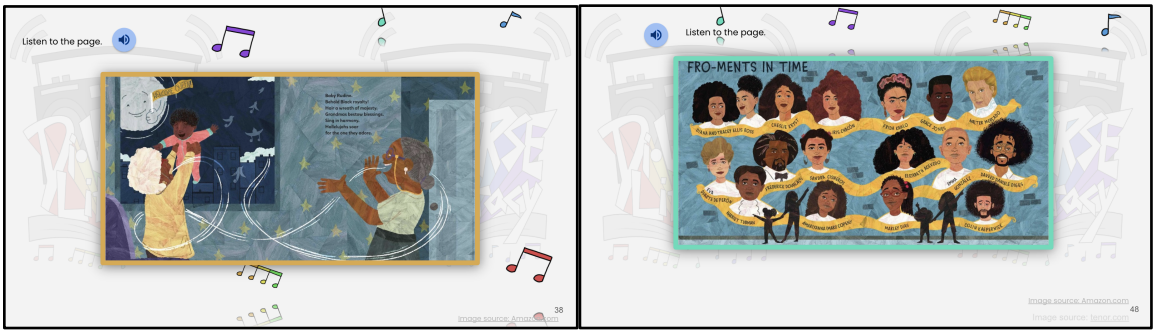
Brittany shared that "[she] liked the boy's haircut and how [her] cousin got a cut like the boy in the story when [she] went to the barbershop with [her] family." Although Shayla and Michelle did not have the experience of going to a barbershop to have their crowns styled, the culturally diverse children's book provided space for them to learn about some boys' hair experiences, like Kevin, Chris, and Eli. It also created space for Shayla and Brittany to make a connection between the time they went to a barbershop with their families.

Children like Eli found *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) to provide "windows" to view some girls' hair experiences like Ashley, Michelle, and Destiny (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) as children progressed through the second week of instruction on days seven through nine. Although Eli did not have the experience of going to a beauty salon to have his crown styled, he had space to

advance his developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) by learning more about the identities and experiences of some of his peers (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). He shared that "the pages in the book with the grandmas (Figure 94) made [him] think of [his] grandma," who passed in 2019, making connections between his lived experiences and the experiences in the text during the focus group interview (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) also provided many children in the class with "windows" to look through into the identities, languages, and experiences of the Brown community (Bishop, 1990, p. 1). When children looked at the "fro-ments in time" mural of Black and Brown people who are known for their accomplishments and notable hairstyles (Ramos, 2021, p. 24), Shayla recognized "Frida Khalo" (Figure 95) and shared that she was known for "painting," identifying a cultural icon and history of a community with whom Shayla shares the world on day seven.

Figure 95

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



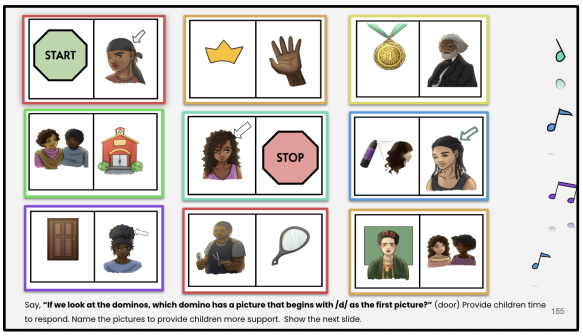
After children listened to the two read-alouds, they spent days ten and 11 playing the beginning phoneme dominoes matching game (Figure 96), using vocabulary and illustrations from *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021). The literacy activity required children to know the names of the images first before children isolated the beginning sounds in the words to match them. The images also provided children space to continue drawing on their

funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) as well as new understandings they may have developed about their classmates and others with whom they share the world during phonics instruction. While the dominoes continued to provide Simone and Walter with "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) into the vocabulary and language of some of their classmates, some of the dominoes provided space for children like Brianna and Destiny to make connections between their hair experiences and the experiences of some of their classmates.

On both days, children reviewed the images and the names of the images as a class before children matched the dominoes as a whole group, with a partner, or individually. When Brianna began matching her dominoes individually, she identified do-rag as "bonnet." When Destiny began doing the same, she shared that the do-rag also reminded her of a "bonnet." Although Brianna and Destiny could not name the do-rag and Destiny considered some of the vocabulary words as "hard," their funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) and developing cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) allowed them to recognize parallels between the experiences of using a do-rag with a bonnet (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) as a cultural resource people in their communities use to take care of their hair.

Figure 96

Beginning Phoneme Dominoes in the Instructional Slides



While the beginning phoneme dominoes matching game provided some children "windows" to see into the identities and experiences of their classmates (Bishop, 1990, p. 1), the

rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, provided some children "widows" to hear their classmates' Hip Hop identities and experiences as well. After Destiny heard the song for the first time, she thought "it was just okay" and it "reminded [her] of Barbie music" she listened to at home on day four. After listening to the song throughout the remainder of the intervention, she shared that "[she] liked the song." While Cool Cuts Happy Hair took some time to grow on Destiny, Simone drew a picture of herself listening to the song during phonics time when she reflected on the literacy jobs she did during the last week of the intervention (Figure 97).

Figure 97

Simone's Week Three Individual Reflection

Through Destiny and Simone's music experiences during Di•VERSE Literacy, they had the opportunity to engage in some of the musical identities and experiences of their peers, which allowed them to continue seeing and hearing others with whom they share the world before engaging in explicit or direct literacy instruction.

While the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy created space during FLI for children who self-identified as Black, and People of Color with equitable educational learning opportunities that ensured that they attained the same educational goals fairly and successfully in PA in

various ways as opposed to traditional FLI (Gay, 2023; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013), the first unit simultaneously created space for children to have access to "mirrors" and "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) that allowed them to see their multilayered identities and cultures honored and embraced in ways that reflected societal diversity more justly.

As a strength and asset-based curriculum, Di•VERSE Literacy also provided children with opportunities to see themselves and others, including their identities, lived experiences, and languages, through culturally diverse children's literature and literacy activities that supported children in understanding who they are and who others are with whom they share the world. Di•VERSE Literacy centered the identities, lived experiences, and languages of communities of Color that have been historically silenced and marginalized in US classrooms instead of children engaging in their school district's mandated literacy curriculum that centers the identities, lived experiences, and languages of the dominant White community. Additionally, Di•VERSE Literacy generated opportunities for children to engage in shared learning experiences among the classroom community instead of children working in their school district's independent literacy practice books individually. By centering communities of Color during FLI, children recognized that their identities and lived experiences belonged in the classroom instead of believing that they needed to take on a separate identity that erased the foundation of their being (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Finding Two: Examining Children's Critical Consciousness and Pursuits of Intellect and Criticality

To support children in recognizing the connection between their academic success and the everyday problems of society "that is deeply divided along racial, ethnic, linguistic, . . .

social, political, and cultural lines" (Ladson-Billings, 2012, p. X), children had space to share power with their teacher, Ms. Kos, during the intervention to advance their developing critical consciousness. While children were developing their critical consciousness, they were also in their pursuits of intellect and criticality (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). Through these pursuits, children engaged in instruction that helped them recognize and name inequities and injustices while also providing children with learning opportunities that were humanizing and compassionate (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhmmad, 2020).

During these learning opportunities incorporated in Di•VERSE Literacy, children gained new understandings of the content and experiences they should become more knowledgeable about, such as equity and justice, to apply that knowledge in real-world settings "to experience joy and critique the problems of the world" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 100). When children become more knowledgeable about equity and justice, their experiences in the classroom are rooted in fairness and inclusion while being free of bias and favoritism (Muhammad, 2023). Children did this through the four practices Morrison and colleagues (2008) name that must be present to support children's critical consciousness while engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy. These practices created space for children to engage in FLI that centered Blackness in various ways while disrupting Whiteness during traditional FLI. This finding examines children's experiences advancing their critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021) as they were in the pursuits of intellect and critically (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) while engaging with the first Di•VERSE Literacy unit.

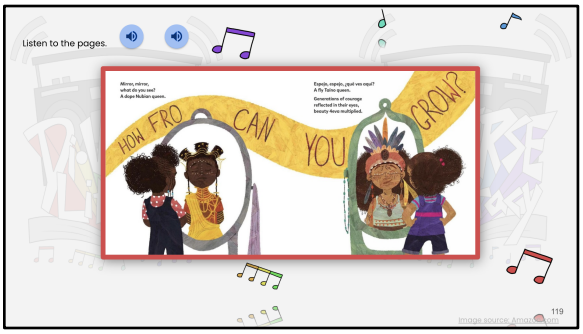
The first practice, (1) critical literacy, was utilized through my selection of the four culturally diverse children's books written and illustrated by authors and illustrators who self-identify as Black and Brown to provide children with a series of texts on similar experiences to

center those that better reflect Black, Brown, and People of Color such as their hair stories (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023). Additionally, the texts incorporated the authors and illustrators' cultures and languages, such as Black Language and Spanish, to better reflect these experiences. When children engaged with the texts, they had space to recognize inequities and injustices in school and society that previously prevented them from accessing their lived experiences and home languages as assets to further their academic success in the classroom (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

For example, Brittany shared that her favorite part of *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) was "the pages with the girls looking in the mirror, saying mirror, mirror on the wall (Figure 98)." While mirror, mirror on the wall is a well-known line from the classic or traditional fairytale Snow White (1937) centering a White princess, Ramos (2021) added a cultural and racially influenced twist to the line while centering Black and Brown girls. She wrote, "Mirror, mirror what do you see? A dope Nubian queen. Espejo, espejo, qué ves aquí? A fly Taíno queen." (p. 15-16). In contrast, the girls saw their beauty, histories, and royalties to African kingdoms and Spanish ancestry reflected in the mirrors.

Figure 98

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



During the read-aloud, Brittany had space to engage in Black Language and Spanish, which has been historically missing in traditional read-alouds during phonics instruction (Milner, 2020; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Her favorite part demonstrated her recognition of injustices that prevented her from utilizing these languages, displaying her investment in the relatable content (Souto-Manning et al., 2018) and her developing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Morrison et al., 2008) instead of engaging with the line in White Mainstream English in a read-aloud aligning with mandated curriculum like the CCSS (2021) or MK-12SELA (2021) making members of the White dominant group of American society often visible and present in curriculum at large (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

Similar to Brittany, Shayla also advanced her developing critical consciousness while listening to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021). She (2) engaged in social justice work through critical conversations by inquiring about the Black and Brown girls' hair and how it changed from the left page to the right on day nine (Figure 99). Specifically, Shayla wanted to know "if the girls were the same with the ponytails and braids as the girls with the puffy hair," emerging from her emotional concerns (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023).

Figure 99

Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

In a compassionate and humanizing way (Muhammad, 2023), their teacher, Ms. Kos, used the illustrations in the text to explain how heat and humidity can make some people's hair, including

hers, change from “straight and exactly how they want it to frizzy, or simply let loose.” Instead of engaging with a traditional fairytale like Snow White, where the White princess’ hair stays consistently straight throughout the text, which is considered a beauty norm by the White dominant group of society (Bishop, 1990, 2007; Brooks & McNair, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Souto-Manning et al., 2018), Shayla had space during literacy instruction to deepen her understanding about her identity, and hair story (Brooks & McNair, 2014; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). This experience allowed her to reshape and rethink her experiences with her hair that were culturally and racially influenced while also being free from favoritism of the hair experiences of the White dominant group.

As children listened to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), children (2) continued engaging in social justice work through critical conversations about the mural of Black, Afro-Latine, and non-Black Latine people who are known for their accomplishments, notable hairstyles, and working hard for people to be treated fairly and justly on days seven through nine. Although Shayla recognized “Frida Kahlo” while drawing from her funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) on day seven, many of the children in the class were explicitly or directly introduced to many of the cultural icons (Figure 100).

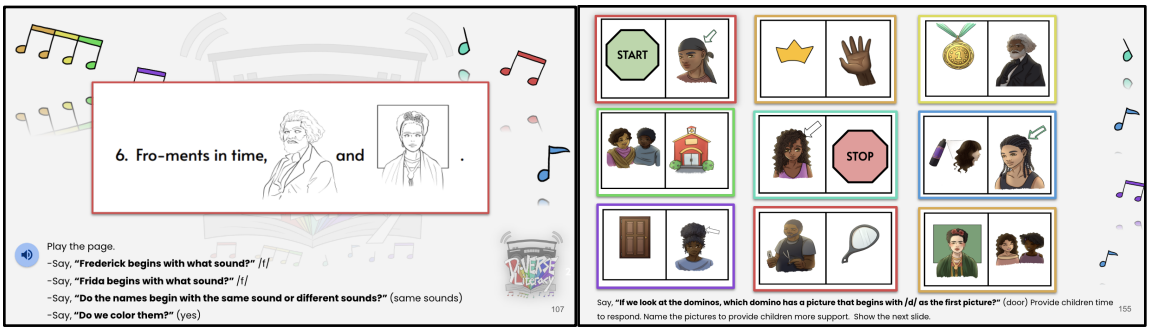
Figure 100

Beginning Sounds Worksheet Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

Then, children continued to see two specifically, Frida Khalo and Fredrick Douglass, during literacy activities that extended the text, such as iSpy, the tongue ticklers, the beginning sounds matching worksheet (Figure 101), and the beginning phoneme dominoes.

Figure 101

Beginning Sounds Worksheet Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



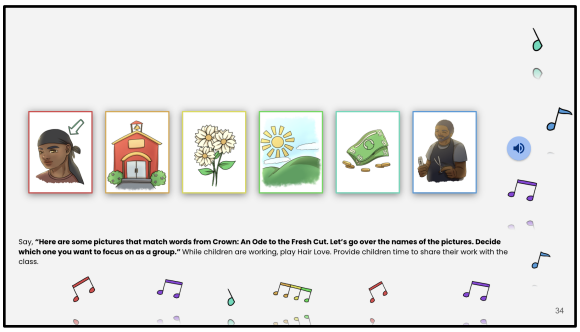
Through these encounters, children had the opportunity to expand their understanding of the histories of communities of Color who have been historically marginalized by beginning to see their identities and experiences during phonics instruction (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020). As children saw Freddrick and Frida more frequently during the phonics lessons, some children, like Eli, Brittany, and Michelle, began recognizing the cultural icons and learning about Black and Brown histories. By seeing their identities and experiences that are racially and culturally influenced in daily classroom curriculum during September and October as opposed to being limited to racial and ethnic celebration months, children had space to disrupt inequities and injustices and engage literacy instruction that was free of bias and favoritism of the White dominant group of society (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2018).

While the inclusion of culturally diverse children's literature supported children in advancing their developing critical consciousness through the practices of (1) critical literacy and (2) social justice work, the inclusion of literacy activities such as the tongue ticklers and the

ABC wall cards created space for children to continue engaging in social justice work through critical conversations about the identities, experiences, and languages of communities of Color. For example, when children worked independently or with a partner, children selected one of the images in the instructional slides to create a tongue tickler phrase with two words that began with the same sound based on a word from *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) on day six. While Shayla and Chris were working, they initially selected "do-rag" and thought of a word they could use to describe it that began with /d/ (Figure 102). Their classroom volunteer, Ms. Morse, who self-identified as a White woman and retired teacher, suggested "dirty do-rag" in which Shayla immediately exclaimed, "His do-rag isn't dirty. It's clean!" as she pointed and redirected Ms. Morse's attention to the instructional slide.

Figure 102

Tongue Tickler Images from Crown an Ode to the Fresh Cut in the Instructional Slides



Through this encounter, Shayla recognized do-rags as part of the lived experience of some members' hair stories in the Black community. Criticality created space during literacy instruction for Shayla to gain print authority or a deep understanding of this topic and space to critique and offer her perspective on this topic (Muhammad, 2020). While the White dominant narrative of society associates Blackness with inferiority (Dumas & ross, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1998) and adjectives like "dirty," Shayla recognized the meaning of the phrase. She realized the meaning did not fit the illustration based on her identities, perspectives, and

experiences. Using the tools she developed, she responded to this injustice she encountered in the classroom to protect herself and her community from harm (Ginwright & James, 2002; Muhammad, 2020).

Additionally, the inclusion of the ABCs created space for children to continue engaging in social justice work through critical conversations about the identities, experiences, and languages of communities of Color. Many alphabet wall card sets in traditional literacy curriculum use animals and objects to represent the names of the images and phoneme-grapheme correspondences (e.g., Journeys, EL Education, HMH Into Reading). Instead of using primarily animals and objects, Di•VERSE Literacy centered people who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in 24 wall cards while including some objects that are culturally and racially influenced and a few animals (Figure 103).

Figure 103

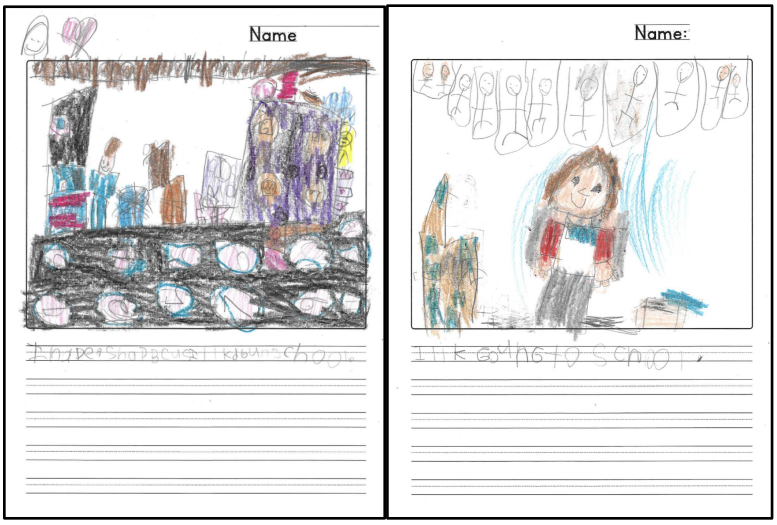
Children's Alphabet Chart

By centering communities of Color who have been historically marginalized in a humanizing and compassionate way (Muhammad, 2020, 2023) through the ABC wall cards, children had

space to recognize inequities and injustices that prevented them from experiencing a sense of belonging (Souto-Manning et al., 2022), which Alvin noticed. Then, he highlighted the Di•VERSE Literacy ABCs as a meaningful and relatable classroom resource during phonics instruction in his individual reflections. In his week one reflection, Alvin represented the ABC wall cards with a row of squares in a line going across the wall in his classroom, which he colored with a brown crayon (Figure 104). In his week two reflection, he added details to the squares by drawing people and coloring a few (Figure 104).

Figure 104

Alvin's Week One and Week Two Individual Reflection



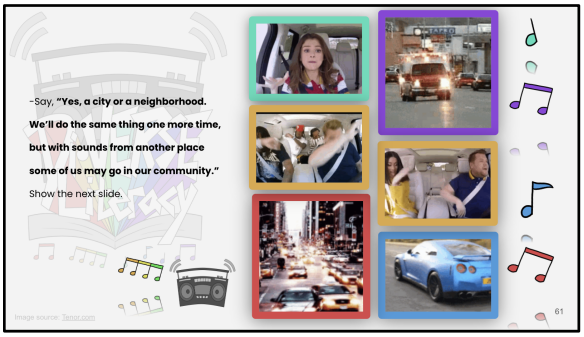
Moreover, some PA activities (2) supported children in engaging in social justice work while also supporting children in (3) explicitly recognizing the power dynamics of society. When children recognize the power dynamics of society, this recognition can help them recognize the culture of power while valuing children's rich linguistic repertoires, such as their home languages, in the classroom (Morrison et al., 2008). Specifically, children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color can recognize how words with the same meaning can be delivered differently through languages while simultaneously contributing to their developing

critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021). They can also recognize that there are more ways to say something and one way to spell it when making direct connections to print (Meier, 2008). Instead of engaging in FLI that supports children in recognizing academic language or White Mainstream English as formal language and their home languages as informal languages in children's school districts mandated literacy curriculum (hmhco.com), children engaged in PA activities that incorporated Black Language, Spanish, and White Mainstream English (Appendix A).

By including the three languages in Di•VERSE Literacy, children recognized that they had space to use their home languages in various ways, including their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills during phonics instruction. When children were playing with familiar sounds, Eli quickly recognized his space in the classroom to access his lived experiences and home languages as assets to further his academic success on day two (Flores, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Souto-Manning et al., 2022). After having the initial experience of playing with familiar sounds in places in his community like the barbershop and hair salon and being introduced to the ABCs on day one, Eli identified one of the first three sounds as the "po po" on day two, drawing from his home language or Black Language vocabulary. Instead of requiring Eli to refer to the siren as a siren, ambulance, or police in White Mainstream English to answer the literacy content questions, Eli used a synonym in his home language or Black Language to answer the questions correctly after recognizing the usage of vocabulary in his home language was an option during phonics instruction the day before (Figure 105).

Figure 105

Playing With Familiar Sounds in the Instructional Slides



When children played iSpy with the illustrations from *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), they had space to name things that began with /b/ on day eight. In Black Language, which was incorporated in the instructional slide (Figure 106), children could name the girls' hair in "braids" or their hair accessories as "balls" or "bobos." Like Eli, Brittany drew from her home language or Black Language and identified the girls' hair accessories as "bobos."

Figure 106

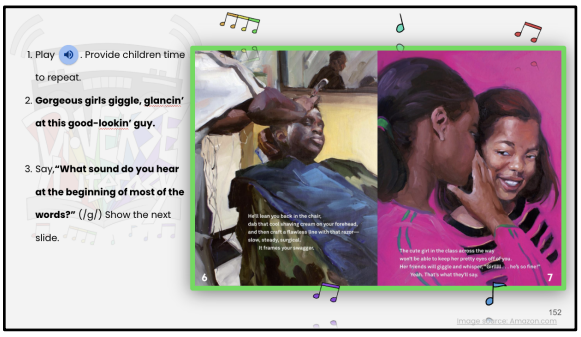
Pages from Hair Story in the Instructional Slides

While Eli and Brittany drew from their home languages, specifically their vocabularies, to engage in critical conversations during literacy instruction, children in the class had other opportunities to engage in critical conversations using Black Language, Spanish, and White Mainstream English during the tongue tickler activities. Children listened to my tongue tickler audio recordings, many in Black Language, some in White Mainstream English, and a few in

Spanish similar to Ramos' (2021) writing style, as children viewed pages from *Crown* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) on days five and day eight. The visuals supported children's meaning-making of the tongue ticklers written in various languages based on their understanding of the texts and their listening skills. After the children listened to the tongue ticklers, they had the opportunity to repeat them in the various languages as well, utilizing their speaking skills. When children repeated the tongue ticklers, they used the various languages to support them in identifying the beginning sound they heard numerous times in the sentence. For example, children listened to the sentence, "Gorgeous girls giggle, glancin' at this good-lookin' guy," and identified /g/ as the beginning sound in many words (Figure 107).

Figure 107

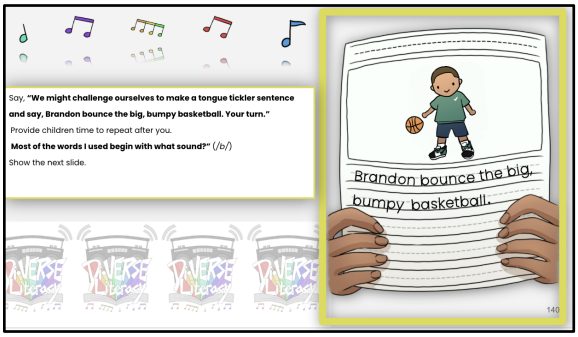
Tongue Tickler Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



Children had the opportunity to listen to additional tongue ticklers in the three languages with direct connections to print through writing samples in the instructional slides on days six and nine. The writing visuals or print extended children's meaning-making of the languages in the texts as well as provided them with scaffolded instruction before children created their own tongue tickler phrases or sentences. For example, children read the tongue tickler, "Brandon bounce the big, bumpy basketball," with Ms. Kos' support to identify /b/ as the beginning sound of most words (Figure 108). Through these examples, children recognized that their home languages could be used in the classroom to support their academic success in literacy.

Figure 108

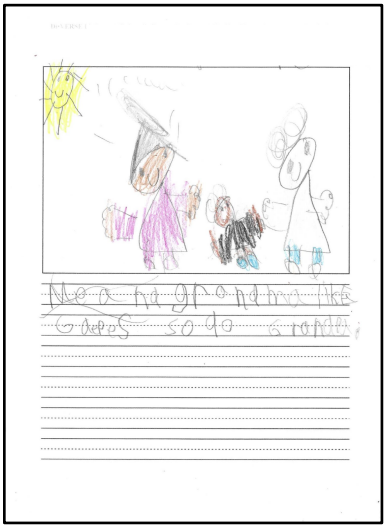
Tongue Tickler Based on Hair Story in the Instructional Slides



When Eli challenged himself to create a tongue tickler sentence independently using the text *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) as opposed to a tongue tickler phrase with two words beginning with the same sound, he started his sentence with, “Me and grandma,” in Black Language as opposed to “Grandma and I,” in White Mainstream English to refer to himself and his grandma (Figure 109) on day nine.

Figure 109

Eli’s Tongue Tickler Sentence from Hair Story



While “Me and grandma like gaepes," included two words with /g/, Eli revised his tongue tickler sentence to, “grandma like gaepes so do grandpa” or “Grandma like grapes so do grandpa” to include three words that began with /g/ (Figure 110).

Eli’s tongue tickler uses features of Black Language, including sentence starters and subject-verb agreement (Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 1977, 2022). He also utilized his PAS in Black Language to write his sentence. Considering children write the way they speak (Meier, 2008) and the loss of /r/ after consonants is a Black Language feature frequently used by young speakers (Bailey & Thomas, 2022), Eli used his funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) of his home language to complete the literacy activity in a humanizing and compassionate way (Muhammad, 2023). Although Eli included the “R” in “grandma” and “grandpa,” it is possible these two words were part of his sight word vocabulary (Ehri, 2020; Ehri & McCormick, 1998) or words that he could recognize instantly by sight.

When children created their self-portraits for their class book (MAISAGELNELTF, 2023; Opitz, 2000), *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, children continued engaging in phonics instruction that created space for them to continue (3) recognizing power dynamics of society and use their home languages as assets to advance their literacy development on day thirteen. When Eli thought about the name of his current hairstyle, he first came up with the two words, “chikin wings.” Then, he decided to come up with a second word that began with /ch/ or /w/. While thinking out loud, he came up with “/ch/, /ch/, /ch/, church.” When Eli read his page to his class, he smiled and shared that he named his hairstyle “chicken wings church” because his hair reminded him of chicken wings on day fourteen (Figure 110). During the focus group interviews, he added that chicken wings were one of his favorite foods, and he went to church sometimes with his godparents (Meier, 2008).

Figure 110

Eli's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Eli's selection of the phrase "chicken wings church" further demonstrates Eli's developing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021), considering he continued to draw from his funds of knowledge as a Black Language speaker during phonics instruction. Instead of naming his hairstyle while utilizing vocabulary in White Mainstream English, Eli selected vocabulary terms that were meaningful and relatable to him as a member of the Black community. Like Eli, Alvin also selected vocabulary terms that were meaningful and relatable to the Black community. Instead of creating a phrase with two words that began with the same sound, Alvin challenged himself and wrote the sentence, "Iamabobshop boss," or I am a barbershop boss (Figure 111). Considering children write the way they speak (Meier, 2008) and the loss of /r/ after consonants is a Black Language feature frequently used by young speakers (Bailey & Thomas, 2022), Alvin also used his funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1994) of his home language to complete the literacy activity in a humanizing and compassionate way (Muhammad, 2023).

Figure 111

Alvin's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

Instead of using "boss," which means a person who oversees a group or a person who is in charge in White Mainstream English (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2024), Alvin used "boss" as a term of endearment in Black Language and Hip Hop culture (Meek Mill, 2011). He recognized how *fly* he is when his crown is styled. He also recognized that he is a *king,* which he emphasized by adding a "shiny glow" around his fresh cut.

After children completed the three-week intervention, their teacher, Ms. Kos, returned to their school district's mandated literacy curriculum to implement phonics instruction. Instead of engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy that centered communities of Color identities, experiences, and languages that are culturally and racially influenced, children engaged in literacy instruction that centered the identities, experiences, and language of the White dominant group of society. When I visited the class in November, Eli and Shayla continued recognizing the power dynamics of society after returning to their district's mandated curriculum for instruction. Eli told me, "You're the best, and I miss you," which Chris and Shayla echoed. Shayla also told me that they "still do phonics…but it's different." She also added that "[she had been] to the (hair) salon"

since the intervention ended. Eli and Shayla's comments demonstrated how they recognized a difference between the strength and asset-based phonics instruction centering children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color that they previously engaged in while I was present and traditional phonics instruction that centers children who self-identify as White.

The fourth practice Morrison and colleagues (2008) name that must be present to support children's critical consciousness is (4) sharing power in the classroom. When teachers share power with children in the classroom, they weave the traditional roles of teacher and student together (Freire, 1998) by reconstructing curriculum **(**Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Through my design of Di•VERSE Literacy and Ms. Kos' implementation of the first unit, children engaged in numerous opportunities to share power with their teacher during the teaching and learning exchange. For example, after children played iSpy using the text *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), Ms. Kos shared with the children that they would line up for music class when she called their hairstyle on day eight. After calling some new hairstyles Ms. Kos learned from implementing Di•VERSE Literacy, Brittany was still sitting on the carpet. Ms. Kos told Brittany that she already called people with braids. Brittany responded, "I don't have braids. These are bobos, Ms. Kos." Then Ms. Kos said, "If you have bobos, you may get in line," and Brittany did. Instead of insisting that Brittany had braids like Ms. Kos initially thought, Ms. Kos positioned herself as a "consumer and recipient" to learn more about Brittany's identities and experiences (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32). At the same time, Brittany recognized that a part of her identity and experiences was missing in the classroom, preventing her from getting in line. Instead of getting in line when Ms. Kos called people with braids, Brittany used the space Di•VERSE Literacy created, her voice, and positioned herself as a "creator and producer" to share that she had bobos while drawing on her funds of knowledge,

using one of her experiences that was racially and culturally influenced (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32).

Ms. Kos and the children continued weaving the traditional roles of teacher and student together (Freire, 1998) to reconstruct curriculum when they created their class text variation, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*. Instead of being limited to the roles of "consumer and recipient" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) of *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020, 2021), children had access to a "sliding glass door" that created space for them to take on the roles of "creator and producer" (Souto-Manning et al., 2018, p. 32) to become part of the worlds Roe (2020, 2021) created. When children were creating their self-portraits, they had autonomy in selecting the format they wanted to use for their page and deciding the name of their favorite hairstyle while receiving support if needed from their teacher, Ms. Kos. Some children like Brianna, Eli, and Michelle created self-portraits with hairstyles they wore to school, and some children like Aaron, Brittany, and Chris created self-portraits with hairstyles they generated. For example, Simone considered drawing a "high ponytail," but she could not think of a word to describe the hairstyle that began with /h/ or /p/. Instead, she changed her mind, selected buns for her hairstyle and described the buns as "brown" (Figure 112). Although Simone self-identified as Arab and did not explicitly see her identity in the read-alouds, *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair*, she had an opportunity to become a part of the worlds Roe (2020, 2021) created while drawing on her funds of knowledge.

Figure 112

Simone's Self-Portrait in Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair

When children reflected on their experience creating their class book during the focus group interviews, several children shared that they felt good or enjoyed the experience. Kevin shared, "I loved it. It's the best book ever. . .because we made it," and Chris shared that "[he] felt happy" sharing his self-portrait with his classmates. While Alvin felt "good" making his self-portrait for the class book, Brianna said, "It made [her] super excited to make the self-portrait." Kevin, Chris, Alvin, and Brianna's responses demonstrate their enjoyment of being creators and producers of knowledge while reconstructing FL curriculum during the teaching and learning exchange as opposed to traditional teacher and student roles.

By incorporating the four practices Morrison and colleagues (2008) name that must be present to support children's critical consciousness in my curriculum design of Di•VERSE Literacy, children who self-identify as Black and Arab had space in the classroom to engage in FLI that centered Blackness in various ways while disrupting Whiteness in traditional FLI (Baker-Bell, 2020; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020). Through critical literacy, children engaged in culturally diverse children's literature that was connected to children's identities and experiences. The texts also supported children in developing skills beyond

traditional literacy instruction by increasing children's participation and engagement in literacy activities that extended the culturally diverse children's literature, such as participating in critical conversations. When children engaged in critical conversations about their shared experiences as a whole group, they engaged in social justice work that allowed them to deepen their understanding of the identities, experiences, and languages of communities of Color. With this deeper understanding, children began to explicitly recognize the power dynamics of society while simultaneously valuing their rich linguistic repertoires that incorporated their home languages that are racially and culturally influenced in the classroom. Considering Di•VERSE Literacy blended the roles of teacher and students through the curriculum design, children in the class and their teacher, Ms. Kos, were able to share power as a classroom community and gave their FL curriculum a "hard re-set" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 73) to better reflect the children's experiences in a compassionate and humanizing way (Muhammad, 2023).

Finding Three: Examining Children's Pursuit of Joy

Considering joy advances children's happiness by including truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in curriculum (Adichie, 2009; Milner, 2020) and allows children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to see their darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019), I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to ensure that children could "see themselves fully" so that joy could enter their lives in the classroom (Muhammad, 2023, p. 71). When children engaged in the first unit, they advanced their happiness in three ways. While joy entered some children's lives instantly during various literacy activities that were racially and culturally influenced, joy entered other children's lives gradually across the three-week intervention, and for some children, joy entered their lives regularly throughout the first unit of instruction. This finding examines children's experiences

pursuing joy (Muhammad, 2023) in three different ways while engaging with the first Di•VERSE Literacy unit.

Joy instantly entered Aaron and Chris lives during phonics instruction through their engagement with the beginning phoneme dominoes on days ten and 11. Instead of engaging in the literacy activities in their school district mandated literacy curriculum that included images of a hat, jam jar, crib, and mit(ten) (hmhco.com), children engaged in a literacy activity that incorporated vocabulary and images that were racially and culturally influenced from the culturally diverse children's books, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) and *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), such as crown, hand, and hair (Figure 113).

Figure 113

Crown and Hair Story Beginning Phoneme Dominoes in the Instructional Slides

When Ms. Kos, the children's teacher, went over the literacy jobs they completed during the second week of the intervention, Aaron shared with his class that "[he] was feeling great playing dominoes [with his partner,] Chris." In his individual reflection, Aaron drew himself and a few purple rectangles with a dividing line to represent the dominoes (Figure 114).

Figure 114

Aaron's Week Two Individual Reflection

When Chris reflected on his experience playing beginning phoneme dominoes, he said, "[he] had the most fun playing the dominoes, and the dominoes reminded him of King," his cousin (Meier, 2008). When children engage in literacy activities that use pictures of familiar objects, such as those from a familiar children's book, children are likely to find the activity engaging (Meier, 2008). Through Chris and Aaron's experience playing dominoes using familiar images and objects that were culturally and racially influenced from the culturally diverse children's literature, they found the literacy experience particularly engaging and joyful, considering it was one of the literacy jobs they remembered as "fun" and "great."

Another way joy instantly entered many children's lives during phonics instruction was through their engagement with the rap and Hip Hop song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair. While some children like Kevin and Michelle enjoyed Cool Cuts Happy Hair as soon as the beat dropped when they first heard the song on day four, some children like Aaron, Alvin, Eli, Brittany, and Shayla's engagement with the song grew gradually over the three-week intervention. During the first focus group interview, Kevin asked if "[they could] listen to the song again," and Michelle

said "[she] liked the beat." Brittany said, "I thought the song was good because I could hear some of the rhyming words in the song." Aaron began break dancing shortly after the song started, and then Kevin demonstrated a few moves, too when Ms. Kos played Cool Cuts Happy Hair at the end of the lesson on day seven. When Ms. Kos asked if anyone could match Aaron's b-boyin' moves, Alvin, the author of "bobshop boss," and Eli, the author of "chikin wings church," quickly and simultaneously accepted the challenge, demonstrating how they can pop and lock, too. Eli read his individual reflection and wrote, "The song was cool, but I did not dance," during the second focus group interview. However, Eli must have forgotten his brief dance battle against Aaron and Alvin the week before (Figure 115).

Figure 115

Eli's Week Two Individual Reflection

After the children read their class book, they listened to Cool Cuts Happy Hair. Then, Brittay asked "if [they could] listen to the song" a second time. Many children seconded Brittany's request, and they did on day 14. After the class reread their book, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, the children's teacher, Ms. Kos, told them that they would listen to the song next and Shayla cheered, "yay!" on day 15. As Ms. Kos moved to a different part of the classroom to

grab the worksheets for the children's individual reflections, Brittany jumped up from her spot on the classroom carpet and began singing, "Cool cuts happy hair, [humming the beat for the rest of the words]," while dancing. Then, Shayla quickly joined in by singing, "Cool cuts happy hair," which they repeated three times. They returned to their spots to listen to the rest of Ms. Kos' directions on what they would do next, including the song that "[she] could tell they [were] totally ready for."

After explaining the directions for the individual reflection, Ms. Kos told the children to get ready to hear their song. Brittany, Shayla, and Eli quickly jumped to their feet, demonstrating that they were ready to sing along. Brittany excitedly responded, "Okay, I'm ready." Since there was a slight delay in playing the song, Ms. Kos responded, "Okay, here it goes." Then Brittany reiterated, "I'm ready. I'm ready, c'mon put it on," while she excitedly waited in her spot for the song to start. As soon as the chorus started, Brittany began singing along which Ms. Kos noted. Shortly after, Shayla began singing along too, which Ms. Kos also noted. At the same time, Eli moved around the classroom carpet while dancing to show a few breakdancing moves to his teacher. As the song played, other children in the class began dancing too, including Michelle, who "[did] the worm," while Shayla and Chris "[did] a bridge" that Brittany verbally noted. When Eli read his individual reflection during the third focus interview, he shared that "[he] was happy dancing to the music," including music notes in his drawing (Figure 116).

Figure 116

Eli's Week Three Individual Reflection

Over the same three weeks of instruction and since the beginning of the school year, children ended their morning meeting routine with a self-affirmation children's song before their phonics block of instruction. A few of the songs children could select included The Affirmation Song from Snoop Dogg's (2023) YouTube series, Doggyland: Kids Songs & Nursery Rhymes and 33 Positive Affirmations for Kids Self Esteem from Sage and Zaria's (2018) YouTube channel, SandZ Academy. Some songs were parodies of number-one hits, providing some children with a familiar sound to music they may listen to at home, such as pop and Hip Hop. However, children engaged with the two genres of music in different ways. When children listened to the various self-affirmation songs each morning, they engaged by repeating the words after their teacher, Ms. Kos, and sang along to parts they knew. It was evident that The Affirmation Song (Snoop Dog, 2023) was one of the class's favorites, considering children selected it the most when Ms. Kos used random reporting or sticks for one child to choose one of the six songs for the day. Although children repeated the words and sang the parts they knew, they did not engage in the music by dancing or requesting to hear a song again as they did with

Cool Cuts Happy Hair. While the children's self-affirmation music provided positive statements for building their self-esteem and enhancing their self-awareness, the rap and Hip Hop song included during phonics instruction provided some children space to experience joy that advanced their happiness by having truthful narratives and representations of their communities in their literacy curriculum (Adichie, 2009; Ladson-Billing, 2021; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023).

In addition to joy instantly entering many children's lives during phonics instruction through the rap and Hip Hop music, joy instantly entered some children's lives through their experiences creating their class book, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*. After the children read their class book, Kevin asked if they "could make another sheet," demonstrating the joy he experienced creating his first self-portrait on day 14. Brianna and Alvin shared that "[they] felt good" making their self-portraits and Destiny shared that "[she] liked the cover and how, Michelle, colored it" during the third focus group interview.

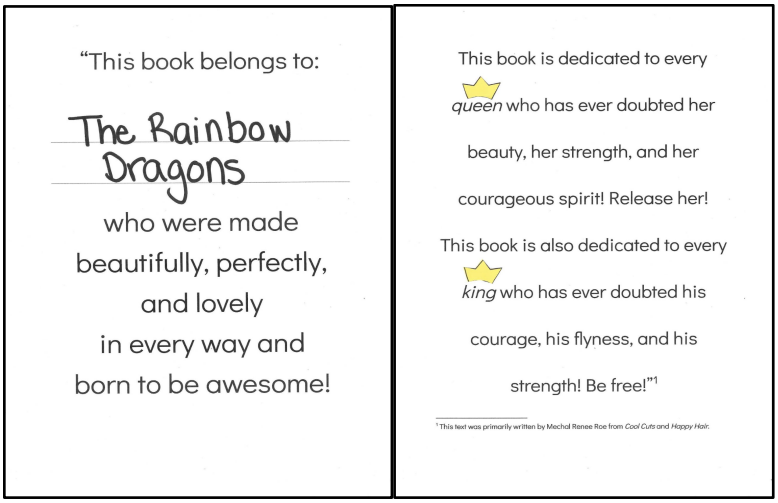
When I visited the class in November, Kevin and Shayla began reading their class book while sitting near their teacher, Ms. Kos, at their horseshoe activity table. First, they went through the text to find their pages to read to each other. Kevin read his page the loudest he had ever read his page before, and Shayla repeated after him, following the same routine they followed when they read the text together as a class. Then, Shayla did the same. After reading their pages, they began reading the entire book with Ms. Kos' support. While they were reading the text, Brianna joined them. When her mom arrived to pick her up early, Brianna grabbed her mom's hand and walked her over to the class book at the table across the classroom. Then she turned to her page and proudly read "pretty puffballs" to her mom. She shared that both words began with /p/ when Ms. Kos asked her. Through this experience, Kevin, Shayla, and Brianna

enjoyed having an authentic audience, including themselves and their families, for their class book so that they could visit throughout the school year to continue experiencing joy that was culturally and racially influenced. They had an opportunity to see their darkness as a contributor to their beauty (Love, 2019) and they had the opportunity to share their beauty with their communities (Muhammad, 2020).

While joy instantly entered some children's lives during specific Di•VERSE Literacy activities, joy entered other children's lives gradually during the three-week intervention, like Michelle, and throughout the three-week intervention overall, like Chris, Eli, and Shayla. Before Michelle attended school for first grade, she attended PK and kindergarten at an elementary school in a neighboring school district where most of the student population self-identified as White. Her mom decided she wanted Michelle to attend a school where more children in her classroom looked like her, and Michelle became a member of Ms. Kos' first grade class, The Rainbow Dragons (Figure 117).

Figure 117

Pages from Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair in the Children's Class Book Variation



When Michelle reflected on her experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy during the first week of instruction, Michelle drew Ms. Kos, Shayla, Chris, and herself on their classroom carpet in her individual reflection (Figure 118). She drew everyone smiling in her drawing and gave herself a straight face.

Figure 118

Michelle's Week One Individual Reflection

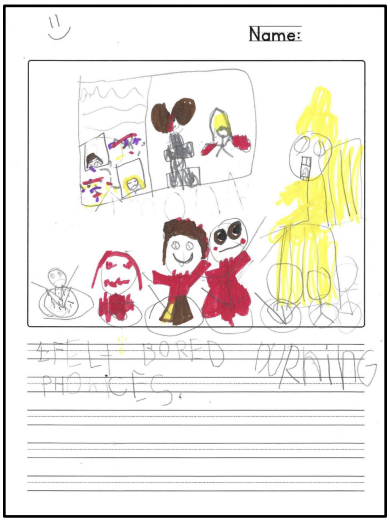
Michelle recognized that her teacher, Ms. Kos, and her classmates, Chris and Shayla, enjoyed the phonics activities while recognizing that she did not. Although Michelle regularly observed during whole group instruction, answered individual questions when called on, volunteered occasionally, and saw her family reflected through "mirrors" in the materials (Bishop, 1990, p. 1), she shared that she did not like the ABCs except the two letters, "M" and "y," because they reminded her of her "mommy." When she reviewed the ABCs on day two and thought of other words that began with the same sound, Michelle thought of words like "apple" for "a." Considering Michelle attended a predominantly White school for PK and kindergarten, she most likely engaged in traditional FLI and became familiar with using animals and objects to develop

her alphabet knowledge instead of using alphabet wall cards that centered communities of Color who have been historically marginalized.

When Michelle reflected on her experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy during the second week of instruction, she drew a few of the same people, including her teacher, Ms. Kos, and classmates, like Shayla, in her individual reflection. However, Shayla was the only classmate smiling and the only classmate who enjoyed the literacy activities according to Michelle. Instead of giving herself a straight face like she did during week one, Michelle gave herself a sad face and added the sentence, "I felt bored during phonics," with the help of a pre-service teacher (Figure 119).

Figure 119

Michelle's Week Two Individual Reflection



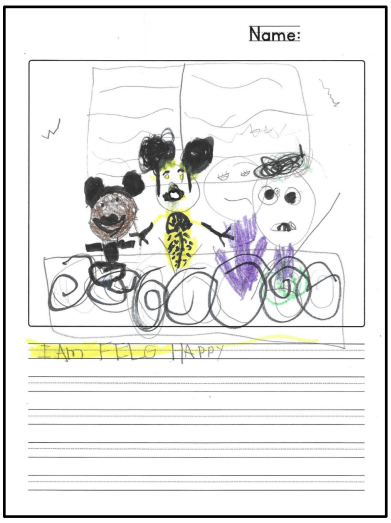
After I shared Michelle's individual reflection with her teacher, Ms. Kos shared that Michelle considered learning activities boring throughout the school day and that she preferred to do her own thing. If she could not do her own thing, then Michelle was not interested in the tasks she should complete as a first grader. For example, when the children completed the beginning sound worksheet based *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017), Michelle preferred taking out

her fuzzy purple notebook and began writing notes instead of paying full attention to the literacy worksheet on day five. When the children were put in pairs to play beginning phoneme dominoes, Michelle was not interested in playing the game with Shayla, although Shayla felt differently on day ten. Instead, Michelle was more concerned about sharing the dominoes that she cut out from her sheet with Shayla. These two experiences demonstrate how Michelle preferred to attend to her interests during the three-week intervention.

When Michelle reflected on her experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy during the third week of instruction, she drew herself and three classmates on the carpet in her individual reflection. She added, "I am felg happy" or I am feeling happy (Figure 120).

Figure 120

Michelle's Week Three Individual Reflection



One of the reasons Michelle felt happy was because her teacher, Ms. Kos, selected her to color their class book cover to build her confidence after the class voted on the graffiti style they wanted (Figure 121). When I complimented Michelle's artwork during the focus group interview, she said "[she] felt shy about the book cover because everyone would see it." Once the class saw it, some children, like Destiny, shared that they liked how Michelle colored it, and

Sayla asked “if [she could] have a turn to color a graffiti book cover,” too. By selecting Michelle to color the class book cover, Michelle had space in the classroom to pursue her interests while also having space to see her darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019). Over the three weeks of instruction, joy gradually entered Michelle’s life in the classroom during phonics instruction.

Figure 121

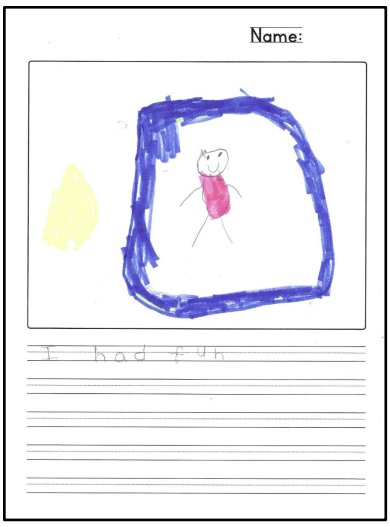
Children’s Class Book Cover Colored by Michelle

While joy instantly entered some children’s lives during particular literacy activities or gradually over the three weeks of instruction, joy entered some children’s lives regularly throughout the three weeks of instruction, like Chris, Shayla, and ELi. Chris participated in the whole group instruction while frequently observing and using his listening skills during the first week of the intervention. For example, when the class reviewed the ABCs and thought of additional words that began with the same sound, Chris repeated “lock” after a classmate when he tried to think of another word that began with /l/ on day three. During the second week of instruction, he began participating more with scaffolded support provided by his teacher, Ms. Kos. Chris also started answering questions individually to recognize beginning sounds in words. When Ms. Kos asked the children to create tongue tickler phrases based on one of the words

from *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021), Chris used "fin" to describe the word "feet" and selected two words that began with /f/ on day six. During the third week of the intervention, Chris level of oral participation continued to increase. When the class read *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*, Chris identified the beginning sound of the names of many of his classmates' hairstyles on days 14 and 15. Instead of quietly reading his page to his class like he did on day 14, Chris read his page, "moon mohawk," in the loudest and most confident voice I observed on day 15. When Chris reflected on his experience engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy, he summed it up in three simple words, "I had fun" (Figure 122).

Figure 122

Chris' Week Three Individual Reflection



When I asked Chris what he thought was fun, he shared that "[he] liked learning and doing phonics." He also added, "It was fun to see you," which I assured him it was fun seeing him, too. Throughout Chris focus group interviews, it was evident that he enjoyed the phonics instruction he received, considering he used positive words like "fun" and "happy" to describe his experiences each week, even though his engagement with the literacy content gradually increased over time. Chris experiences demonstrate how seeing his darkness as a contributor to

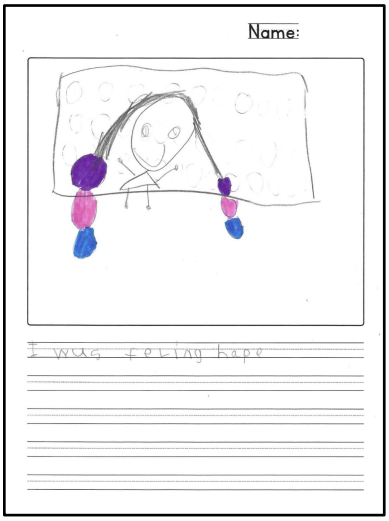
his strength and beauty (Love, 2019) regularly during phonics instruction created space to support his academic growth in FLS while he simultaneously engaged in phonics instruction that was culturally and racially influenced and centered his identities, home languages, and lived experiences.

Throughout the three-week intervention, joy regularly entered Shayla's life in the classroom. During the first week of the intervention, Shayla frequently volunteered and participated during instruction by responding to questions asked to the whole class and individually. While the children were transitioning from their morning meeting to their phonics block, Shayla voluntarily shared with their classroom volunteer, Ms. Morse, that "[their] phonics lessons were about hair," demonstrating her attentiveness and engagement with the content on day one while simultaneously informing Ms. Morse, considering she was not at school that day. During the second week of instruction, Shayla engaged in FLI that supported her academic growth in the four remaining PAS with connections to print. For example, when the class created tongue tickler phrases based on words from *Crown* (Barnes, 2017), Shayla independently thought of "fun flowers" and received scaffolded support from her teacher, Ms. Kos, to spell the consonant-vowel-consonant word, fun, and the word with more advanced spelling patterns, flowers, on day six. During the third week of the intervention, Shayla continued to engage in foundational literacy instruction that supported her academic growth in the four remaining PAS with connections to print.

When the class listened to *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2020, 2021), Shayla said, "[she] love[d] cornrows" and repeated the names of the hairstyles softly to identify the beginning sound in the hairstyle names on day 12. When Shayla reflected on her experience engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy, she wrote, "I wus feeling hape" or I was feeling happy (Figure 123).

Figure 123

Shayla's Week Three Individual Reflection



When I asked Shayla why she was feeling happy, she said, "Because I love doing phonics with Ms. Amber," and I assured her that I loved doing phonics with her, too. In all three of Shayla's individual reflections, she used the word "happy" to describe her experiences engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy. By using the word, happy, Shayla recognized the joy she regularly experienced by having access to truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in FL curriculum (Adichie, 2009; Milner, 2020). Although Shayla displayed the targeted PA skill before engaging in the first unit, she still found the instruction enjoyable, considering it was culturally and racially influenced and centered many of her identities, home languages, and lived experiences. She also enjoyed the experience of engaging in FLI while collaborating with me, a Black co-teacher through my curriculum design, considering I also shared some of her identities, home languages, and lived experiences.

Like Shayla, joy regularly entered Eli's life in the classroom beginning on the first day of instruction. When the class first engaged with Playing With Familiar Sounds, Eli was one of the first children to guess what one of the three sounds was. As the lesson progressed, Eli was also

one of the few children in the class who knew many of the names of the images in the ABC wall cards, including “dab,” which he demonstrated from then on, as well as grillz and locs. Throughout the first week of the intervention, Eli continued to volunteer frequently and answered questions asked to the whole class and individually. During the second week of the intervention, Eli engaged in FLI that allowed him to review the four remaining PAS with connections to print. When the children could write tongue tickler phrases or sentences, Eli challenged himself to write sentences on days six and nine, which Ms. Kos, his teacher, and I noted. During the third week of the intervention, Eli continued to review the four remaining PAS with connections to print. He segmented all the sounds in the words he selected to name his hairstyle using invented spelling (Bear el al., 2000; Meier, 2008) and wrote “chikin wings church” on his self-portrait on day 13. When Eli reflected on his experience engaged with Di•VERSE Literacy, he wrote, “I was happy,” and included a smiley face for the period as well as music notes (Figure 124).

Figure 124

Eli’s Week Three Individual Reflection

By using the word, “happy,” Eli also recognized the joy he regularly experienced by having access to truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in the FL curriculum like Shayla (Adichie, 2009; Milner, 2020). Even though Eli displayed the targeted PA skill before engaging in the first unit, he still found the instruction enjoyable, considering it was culturally and racially influenced and centered many of his identities, home languages, and lived experiences. When I visited the class on Halloween a few weeks after the conclusion of the study, Eli told me that “[I] was the best and that he missed [me].” I assured him he was the best and I missed him, too. Through Eli’s comments, it was evident that he also enjoyed the experience of engaging in Di•VERSE Literacy while collaborating with me, a Black co-teacher through my curriculum design, considering I also shared some of his identities, home languages, and lived experiences.

By including truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in FL curriculum (Adichie, 2009; Milner, 2020) for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to see their darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019), I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to ensure that children had space to “see themselves fully” and for joy to enter their lives in the classroom (Muhammad, 2023, p. 71). Throughout the three-week intervention, children experienced joy by engaging in literacy activities that were tailored to their interests, identities, home languages, and lived experiences, as well as culturally and racially influenced. By having space in the classroom to experience joy as children who self-identify as Black and People of Color, some children experienced joy instantly, regularly, and gradually during the teaching and learning exchange.

Examining Children's Joy Through Black Language Play

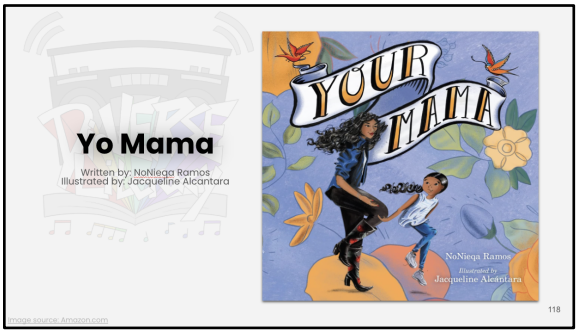
Since five children, Brittany, Kevin, Eli, Shayla, and Michelle, shared "Y" for yo mama was one of their favorite ABC wall cards during the focus group interviews (Figure 125), their teacher, Ms. Kos, and I agreed to end our last session together on a Friday with the read-aloud, *Your Mama* by NoNieqa Ramos and illustrated by Jacqueline Alcántara which inspired the wall card (Figure 126). While Brittany shared, she liked "Y" because "it reminded [her] of [her] big sister who always say, yo mama," Kevin shared "Y" was his favorite because "[he] thought the yo mama [compliments] were funny like the yo mama jokes" he heard before.

Figure 125

ABC Wall Card for "Y" in the Instructional Slides

Figure 126

Your Mama in the Instructional Slides



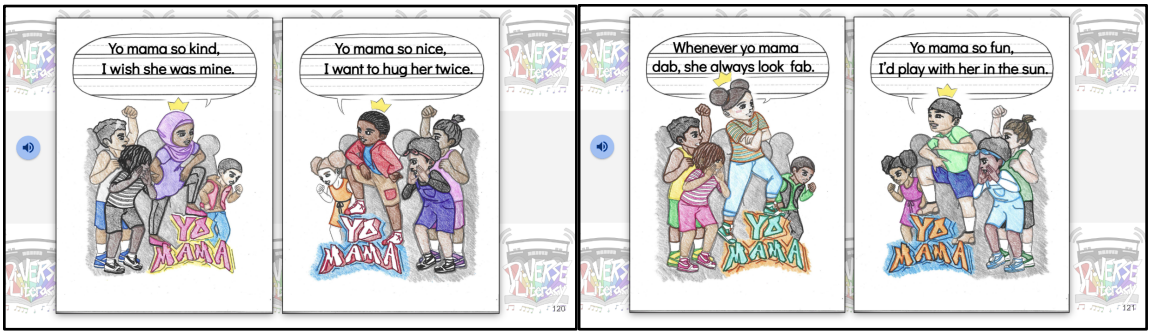
After we reviewed the wall card for "y," I read the text *Your Mama* (Ramos, 2021), a positive cultural spin on the classic joke or the art of verbal *insult* (Smitherman, 1977) with a mix of

Spanish and Black Language "lyricism and gorgeously fluid illustrations [as] a declaration of mad love and respect between kids and hardworking mamas everywhere" (Ramos, 2021, p. x).

Next, children revisited the letter "Y" wall card, relistening to the compliments they listened to on day one when they were introduced to the ABCs. Following the same routine as the tongue ticklers, we listened to the compliment recorded by Asar Alexander, who self-identifies as Black and an early elementary learner during the curriculum design phase. I repeated the compliment, and then the children and I said it together in Black Language. After repeating the Black Language examples such as "Yo mama so kind, I wish she was mine," or "Yo mama so nice, I want to hug her twice," and a few others (Figure 127), children thought of positive words they might use to describe special women in their families and communities, such as their moms. Then, some children continued using Black Language Play (Meier, 2008) to collaborate in small groups at their tables or Hip Hop communities of practice (Love, 2015; Wilson, 2007) to think of a complete compliment during FLI.

Figure 127

Your Mama Compliments in the Instructional Slides



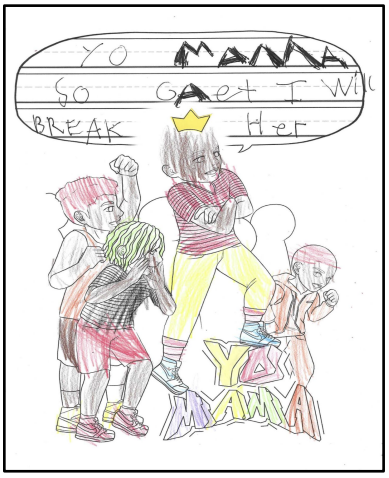
Additionally, children were encouraged to select a similar template favoring their self-portraits, *roasting* a peer along with their crown template to continue reminding them that they are *kings* and *queens* (Beyoncé, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Nas, 2002). This culturally responsive literacy and language experience provided children who self-identify as Black and People of

Color space in the classroom to utilize Black Language and Spanish through their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Considering children write the way that they speak, this literacy and language experience incorporated during phonics instruction also provided children who self-identify as Black Language speakers the opportunity to advance their beginning encoding or writing development through invented spelling in a culturally and racially influenced way (Meier, 2008; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023).

Eli read his compliment as, “Yo mama so great, I will break her,” while demonstrating how tightly he would hug her as he smiled (Figure 128). Eli’s compliment utilized Black Language vocabulary. He also utilized the verb phrase sentence structure in Black Language, where the verb, be, does not occur on the surface or zero copula to refer to the absence of “is” in the first part of his sentence (Goodwin, 1990; Green 2002, 2022; Meier, 2008; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000; Washington & Seidenberg, 2021).

Figure 128

Eli’s Yo Mama Compliment



While Eli previously demonstrated his alphabet knowledge, knowledge of spelling patterns that use two letters to spell a sound, such as consonant digraphs and long vowels during the three-week intervention, he also demonstrated his knowledge of more advanced spelling patterns, such

as the letters “ea” spelling /ĕ/ in break. Considering many young Black Language speakers' language experiences include the loss of /r/ after consonants (Bailey & Thomas, 2022), it is possible that Eli’s home language includes this feature in some of his vocabulary since he spelled the word “great,” without spelling /r/ in addition to words in his tongue tickers.

Ashley read her compliment as, “Yo mama, she love you, sis,” utilizing “sis” as a term of endearment frequently used by females who self-identify as Black and Black Language speakers who share a close bond to represent kinship (Baker-Bell, 2020; Meier, 2008; Smitherman, 2022) (Figure 129). Additionally, Ashley used Black Language subject-verb agreement in her sentence by using “ she love you” instead of “she loves you” in White Mainstream English (Goodwin, 1990; Green 2002, 2022; Meier, 2008; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000; Washington & Seidenberg, 2021).

Figure 129

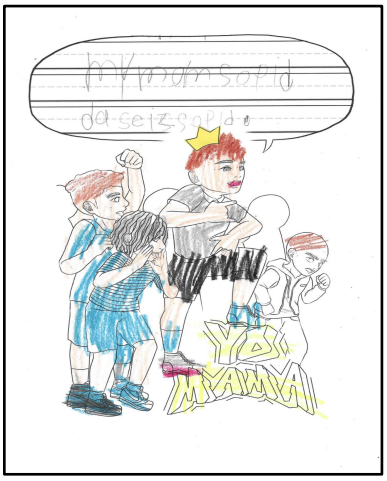
Ashley’s Yo Mama Compliment

While Ashley previously demonstrated her alphabet knowledge during the three week intervention, she also demonstrated her developing knowledge of more advanced spelling patterns, such as two letters to spell /sh/ in she and the letters “ow” to spell /ŏ/ in yo.

Instead of complimenting one of Alvin's classmates' mamas, he complimented his mom and wrote, "My mom so pretty, dang, she is so pretty," to emphasize his mom's beauty (Figure 130). Like Eli, Alvin also utilized the Black Language feature, verb phrase sentence structure where the verb, be, does not occur on the surface or the copula absence to refer to the lack of the word "is" in the first part of his sentence (Goodwin, 1990; Green 2002, 2022; Meier, 2008; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000; Washington & Seidenberg, 2021).

Figure 130

Alvin's Yo Mama Compliment



An additional Black Language feature Alvin included was the loss of /r/ after consonants (Bailey & Thomas, 2022) in the word "pid" or pretty. Alvin lost the /r/ after the consonant "P" in pretty and he also lost the /r/ after the consonant "B" in his self-portrait, "bobshop boss" or barbershop boss, as a young Black Language speaker (Bailey & Thomas, 2022). Considering Alvin writes how he speaks (Meier, 2008), he used invented spelling, including a combination of letter-sound correspondences and letter names to spell the sounds in "pretty." In this case, Alvin used the letter name "D" to spell the last two sounds or phonemes in the word, /d/ /ē/. While Alvin previously demonstrated his alphabet knowledge during the three week intervention, he

also demonstrated his developing knowledge of more advanced spelling patterns, such as two letters spelling /sh/ in she and long vowels.

Although Simone did not complete her yo mama compliment, she started with, “yo mama so nice,” similar to the example from the beginning of the lesson, and asked her teacher, Ms. Kos, for support. Through her participation, Simone demonstrated her willingness to engage in Black Language Play as a child who self-identified as Arab while simultaneously learning about many of her peers' literacy and language experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2020, 2023). Through the yo mama lesson, many children who self-identified as Black and Arab engaged in a farewell literacy and language experience that continued to provide children with truthful narratives and representations of historically marginalized communities of Color in FL curriculum (Adichie, 2009; Milner, 2020) to continue seeing their darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019) while in the pursuit of joy in US classrooms (Muhammad, 2023).

CHAPTER 6 - IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY, AND RESEARCH

This study contributes to scholarly discussions and adds to the literature regarding young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color culturally responsive experiences and FL experiences in US classrooms. While PAD is considered an essential and foundational component of literacy development according to various reading models (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001) and education policy (CCSS, 2021; MK-12SELA, 2021), this study shows the potential for improving young children's experiences in classrooms where they are mandated to engage with literacy curriculum incorporating PAI by their school districts.

The study provides implications for teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals who are particularly interested in providing children with joyful, culturally responsive, and equitable educational experiences. Findings further support the recognition of the experiences of children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color when engaging in teaching practices and curriculum resources that honor and embrace their cultural and racial identities, home languages, and lived experiences while simultaneously advancing their FLD. Specifically, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies, superintendents, board members, and principals can learn about culturally responsive FLI from the first graders and their teacher, Ms. Kos, experiences engaging with Di•VERSE Literacy in various ways that have implications for teaching and teacher education, policy, and research. In this chapter, I include a brief summary of Di•VERSE Literacy's influence on the first graders' academic growth in FLS and their

experiences engaging with the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum. I also examine implications for teaching and teacher education, policy, and research.

Summary of the Findings

I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to provide young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color space in US classrooms to engage in a teaching and learning exchange during FLI that centers their identities, home languages, and lived experiences that are culturally and racially influenced. When the 13 first graders who self-identified as Black and Arab in Ms. Kos' first grade class, engaged in the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, they received instruction that aligned with their literacy development, strengths, and assets to advance their academic learning in PA and beginning decoding and encoding development or reading and writing. As discussed in chapter 4, at the conclusion of the study, 11 of the 13 participating children *displayed* the targeted PA skill, identifying beginning sounds in words.

Additionally, three children, Chris, Aaron, and Kevin, were *being introduced* to the remaining four PAS. Three children, Brianna, Brittany, and Destiny, were *displaying* and *exploring* the remaining four PAS. One of the children, Alvin, *displayed* beginning decoding or reading and *exploring* beginning encoding or writing words with two to four phonemes in Black Language or White Mainstream English. Four children, Eli, Ashley, Shayla and Michelle, *displayed* beginning decoding and encoding skills or reading and writing words with two to four phonemes in Black Language or White Mainstream English. Placing children at the center of FLI, allowed them to attain the same educational goals fairly and successfully in PA as opposed to traditional FLI while also advancing their various stages of literacy development (Gay, 2023; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013). Di•VERSE Literacy also incorporated space during instruction for children to advance their literacy development in additional FLS at

their various levels of development which is typically missing in traditional literacy instruction. Traditional literacy instruction typically tends to focus on one literacy skill specifically in isolation (e.g. Journeys, EL Education, HMH Into Reading). Instead of the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy only focusing on identifying beginning sounds, the curriculum created space for children to focus on several PAS and FLS throughout the unit.

Additionally, I designed Di•VERSE Literacy to provide young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color access to "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) to see their multilayered identities and cultures honored and embraced in ways that reflect societal diversity more justly. At the conclusion of the study, as demonstrated throughout Chapter 5, the 13 children advanced their developing cultural competence while in pursuit of their identities by seeing and hearing themselves, their families and communities (Bishop, 1990; Milner, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2022) or by seeing and hearing others with whom they share the world in the curriculum which allowed them to experience a sense of belonging in school (Bishop, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2021; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning et al., 2022).

Children also advanced their developing critical consciousness while in the pursuits of intellect and criticality by sharing power with their teacher, Ms. Kos, during the teaching and learning exchange. Simultaneously, children engaged in instruction that created space for them to recognize and name inequities and injustices in humanizing and compassionate ways (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Muhmmad, 2020). Children advanced their happiness while in the pursuit of joy by seeing their darkness as a contributor to their strength and beauty (Love, 2019; Muhammad, 2023) through the curriculum materials which were culturally and racially influenced. By placing children's identities, home languages, and lived experiences at the center of FLI, they had space

to “see themselves fully” (Muhammad, 2023, p. 71) and engage in social justice work as opposed to traditional FLI (Gay, 2023; Milner, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Souto-Manning, 2013).

Implications for Teaching and Teacher Education

Findings from this study provide multiple practical implications for teachers and teacher educators. For example, teachers might consider creating space in their classrooms to implement Di•VERSE Literacy to provide children with culturally responsive FLI. While teachers may be mandated by their school districts to implement their literacy curriculum for phonics instruction, some with fidelity, teachers may recognize a mismatch between the curriculum, identities, home languages, lived experiences, and literacy development of children in their class. Teachers may also recognize the importance and urgent need to provide children with culturally responsive learning experiences in the classroom. Although teachers may not be able to implement Di•VERSE Literacy during their phonics block, due to restrictive practices that require them to follow a particular curriculum and pacing guide (Burke & Koumpilova, 2021; Chambers, 2018; New York City Department of Education [NYCDE], 2023), they may implement the intervention or select particular lessons during another time of the school day to provide children with learning experiences that are culturally and racially influenced and aligned to their stages of literacy development. Teachers may use the Di•VERSE Literacy lessons as a “mentor text” to support their design of culturally responsive literacy lessons to advance children’s academic growth in FL and other literacy components.

Teacher educators may consider sharing this study and Di•VERSE Literacy lessons with pre-service and in-service teachers to support them in understanding and recognizing what culturally responsive FLI looks like in practice for them to implement in their future and current primary grade classrooms. Teacher educators can support pre-service and in-service teachers in

developing a better understanding of what it means to share power in the classroom (Freire, 1998) with young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color. When pre-service and in-service teachers engage with children during the teaching and learning exchange, they must recognize the importance in positioning themselves as learners and children as teachers (Freire, 1998; Souto-Manning et al., 2018). Considering children are the true experts in their lives (Tisdale, 2016) and traditional literacy curriculum and FLI typically centers the identities, languages, and lived experiences of the dominant White group of society (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2020), pre-service and in-service teachers can learn from children and their families about their identities, languages, and lived experiences to make instruction more meaningful and relatable for children.

Additionally, pre-service and in-service teachers can learn what it means to center instruction on children's identities, home languages, and lived experiences instead of centering on what the teacher is doing (Souto-Manning et al., 2018), which can result in children having joyful and equitable learning experiences while in the classroom. Teacher educators can also use the Di•VERSE Literacy lessons as a "mentor text" to support pre-service and in-service teachers in designing culturally responsive literacy lessons to advance children's academic growth in other literacy components such as fluency development.

Implications for Policy

When superintendents, board members, and principals select literacy curriculum for their school districts' mandated instruction, specifically in foundational literacy, they should select curriculum that is culturally responsive, research-based, and consider curriculum, like Di•VERSE Literacy. They may also consider selecting Di•VERSE Literacy as a FL intervention. They should remember that education policy typically does not consider children who self-

identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities, home languages, and lived experiences when they enter US classrooms. Education policy typically does not consider children's various stages of literacy development either. However, superintendents, board members, and principals should consider children's identities, home languages, lived experiences, and literacy development to provide children attending schools in their communities with learning experiences that are culturally responsive, joyful, and equitable while providing children with a sense of belonging.

Therefore, changes to education policy are necessary to support culturally responsive PAI in early childhood settings. In addition to selecting Di•VERSE Literacy as mandated literacy instruction or as an intervention, superintendents, board members, and principals must consider how they can prepare teachers to implement Di•VERSE Literacy in culturally responsive ways considering this classroom resource is a starting point for teachers to bridge theory to practice and create culturally responsive FL learning experiences for children. Superintendents, board members, and principals may consider creating space in their school district's budget for paid summer professional development for teachers to learn how to incorporate Di•VERSE Literacy in the classroom and deepen their understanding of culturally responsive FLI. Superintendents, board members, and principals may also consider incorporating time in their school district's calendars and schedules so that teachers have planning time to modify and workshop their lessons to align with the Di•VERSE Literacy framework to better center children in their schools. Additionally, superintendents, board members, and principals may create space in the budget to create a content collaboration team including illustrators, music producers, songwriters, and artists who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to assist teachers with designing the music and illustrations. This way, superintendents, board members, and

principals can help create space in classrooms for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color to see and hear themselves in the classroom, have a voice in their learning and have space to be heard, considering they are the true experts in their own lives.

Curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies can also learn from the first graders' experiences with Di•VERSE Literacy and consider incorporating an intervention like Di•VERSE Literacy into their FL curriculum. Many young children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color enter classrooms across the United States with their cultural, lived, and language experiences on the first day of school, and they begin engaging with mandated literacy curriculum towards the beginning of the school year. Curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies should consider expanding their curriculum to incorporate additional languages and experiences to better support children attending schools where their curriculum is implemented to provide children with culturally responsive, joyful, and equitable learning experiences. This way, curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies can produce classroom resources that create space for children to have similar learning experiences as the children in this study in their classrooms. Curriculum developers and editors who work for publishing companies can communicate these necessities and new innovations with school districts through outreach in a variety of ways including professional development and educational conferences.

Implications for Research

This study holds implications for future research examining teachers' perspectives and experiences implementing culturally responsive FLI. Although this study focused on children who self-identified as Black and Arab and did not focus on their first grade teacher, Ms. Kos, this is a generative area of research that should be examined. Researchers may reflect on Ms. Kos'

experiences implementing Di•VERSE Literacy, considering she was able to position herself as a learner during the teaching and learning exchange. When I first met Ms. Kos, she shared that she recognized the importance of culturally responsive education and wanted to incorporate culturally responsive education more into her classroom. When she introduced me to the class and throughout the first week of the study, she shared with the children that I was there to teach them, including herself, some "cool new phonics" and referred to phonics as "learning about letters and sounds." By positioning herself as a learner, Ms. Kos began sharing power with children which continued throughout the study. Considering this was Ms. Kos' first time implementing the innovative curriculum, I provided her modeling by teaching the lessons on days one, two, and four. After I modeled the Playing With Sounds and introduced the ABCs on days one and two, Ms. Kos finished reviewing the ABCs with the children on day three. After I modeled the first read-aloud lesson of *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) on day four, Ms. Kos continued leading the remainder of the lessons in the study. Before and after the lessons, we checked in with each other to ensure all the lesson components were implemented as intended by my curriculum design while simultaneously considering who the children were as individual learners. Ms. Kos shared that the lessons did not take her long to prepare for based on the lesson design, organization, and layout. She also shared that the curriculum was easy to implement during phonics instruction.

At the conclusion of the study, I asked Ms. Kos, on a scale from one to ten, what number she would give herself in implementing culturally responsive FLI at the beginning and the end of the study. Before implementing Di•VERSE Literacy, she said she would have given herself a two considering she recognized the importance and need for her to provide children with culturally responsive FLI. However, she was unsure how to implement culturally responsive

education in her practice. After implementing the first unit, she said she would have given herself a six, recognizing the growth she made in understanding culturally responsive education and incorporating culturally responsive practices during phonics instruction. Additionally, Ms. Kos asked if she could implement the unit and ABC wall cards with her first grade class next year to continue providing children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color with culturally responsive FLI. Ms. Kos' desire to use the curriculum in the future further demonstrates her interest in continuing to advance her growth, understanding and implementation of culturally responsive FLI. While Di•VERSE Literacy created space for children to engage in joyful and equitable educational experiences, Di•VERSE Literacy also created space for teachers like Ms. Kos to advance their learning in culturally responsive education and add culturally responsive strategies to their teaching practices in more aspects of school curriculum like FLS.

This study also holds implications for future research examining FLI, particularly since this work is typically limited to White Mainstream English (Milner, 2020). When children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in phonics instruction that incorporates multiple languages such as Black Language, Spanish, and White Mainstream English, they have space in the classroom to enjoy hearing themselves and others while having space to listen, speak, write, and begin to read in ways that are culturally and racially influenced while simultaneously advancing their literacy development. When children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color engage in phonics instruction that only incorporates White Mainstream English, they do not have space in the classroom to engage in instruction that is parallel to their identities, languages, and experiences, which can result in children's disengagement with the content, impeding their academic success (Carey et al., 2018).

Future Research

Researchers can learn from the first graders' experiences with Di•VERSE Literacy to create additional culturally responsive and equitable learning experiences for children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color attending US schools in additional aspects of school curriculum. For example, future research might examine the perspectives of teachers who implement Di•VERSE Literacy and or seek to revise their current curriculum to engage the practices discussed in teacher implications. Future research might examine families' perspectives of their children's participation in Di•VERSE Literacy.

To continue supporting children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in building a solid foundation for reading and writing through culturally responsive FLI, my goals as a teacher and researcher include completing my design of the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum in addition to other strength and asset based literacy interventions. After designing the interventions, I intend to conduct future studies, such as longitudinal studies, that will allow me to examine the long-term influence of the interventions on children's overall literacy development and their experiences engaged with the interventions. My future research agenda includes three components to support children in developing letter-sound knowledge, PA, and beginning reading and writing skills in culturally and racially just ways.

Considering many ABC children's books incorporate the names of images that utilize letter names and sounds that can impede children's developing alphabet knowledge, I am interested in turning the ABC wall cards I developed as a part of the Di•VERSE Literacy curriculum into an ABC culturally responsive children's picture book to support children in learning letter-sound knowledge. The text will be accompanied by handwriting and recognizing beginning sounds worksheets, a rap and Hip Hop ABC song, and literacy activities incorporating

images of people and objects that are racially and culturally influenced to support children's learning in a meaningful and relatable way to extend the read-aloud. Some lessons will focus on individual letters while providing children with more opportunities to learn about communities of Color past, present, and future. Children like Brianna, Chris, and Aaron, who were developing alphabet knowledge, could benefit from this intervention by continuing to see themselves and others while simultaneously developing alphabet knowledge. Children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in PK and kindergarten may also benefit from this intervention while developing alphabet knowledge.

After examining the first graders' experiences with the first unit of Di•VERSE Literacy, I am interested in completing my design of the remaining four units of Di•VERSE Literacy to support children in developing all five PAS with a direct connection to beginning reading and writing skills. The remaining four units will focus on different targeted PAS and different lived experiences that are culturally and racially influenced while continuing to make connections to the first unit and ABCs. Children like Brianna, Chris, Aaron, Brittany, Kevin, Destiny, Simone, and Walter, who were developing their PAS, could benefit from this intervention by continuing to engage in equitable learning experiences that allow them to advance their literacy development in joyful ways. Children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in K-2 may also benefit from this intervention while developing PA and beginning decoding and encoding skills. While kindergarteners and first graders may engage with the intervention during whole group instruction, second graders may engage with the intervention in small group instruction.

Considering some first graders have mastery of PAS and beginning decoding and encoding skills, I am interested in developing a phonics intervention utilizing student-generated

decodable readers (Lawson, 2023a, 2023b) to support children in mastering spelling patterns during phonics instruction. When children engage in phonics instruction as co-authors of student-generated decodable readers, they can continue drawing from their funds of knowledge, including their identities, home languages, and lived experiences, while advancing their literacy skills in phonics. Children like Eli, Ashely, Shayla, Michelle, and Alvin, who were developing their beginning decoding and encoding skills, could benefit from this intervention by continuing to draw on their funds of knowledge as they learn more advanced spelling patterns. Children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color in K-2 may also benefit from this intervention while developing beginning decoding and encoding skills during FLI.

Although Di•VERSE Literacy centered mainly on Black Language while incorporating some Spanish, and representations of the Arab community based on my identities, home languages, and lived experiences, future research might examine applying DI•VERSE Literacy in multilingual classrooms across the different primary grade levels while centering mainly on Spanish, Arabic, and additional languages. For example, a researcher whose language repertoire includes Spanish may create a PA unit that centers primarily on Spanish while incorporating some Black Language and or Arabic. Researchers must make these choices based on the children's identities, home languages, and lived experiences who will engage in the unit. Considering Spanish is a syllabic language, they may find connections in teaching syllables in Spanish and English languages. They may also center the unit on a different lived experience that is racially and culturally influenced and more familiar to children, starting with their text set of culturally diverse children's literature. Instead of centering Hip Hop as a music genre, researchers may center instruction on another genre of music that is culturally influenced to support children in developing FLS. In this case, researchers can create space in additional US

classrooms for children who self-identify as Brown and People of Color to have access to "mirrors" and for children who self-identify as Black to have access to "windows" (Bishop, 1990, p. 1) through culturally responsive literacy learning opportunities. Then children can build a strong foundation as beginning readers and writers as they continue advancing their literacy development in K-2 and beyond.

Conclusion

This study addresses the gap in education research investigating the relationship between culturally responsive education, Hip Hop education, and FLI by incorporating children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color identities, home languages, and lived experiences that are racially and culturally influenced into phonics instruction in US classrooms, contributing new knowledge in these areas. Although there is a translanguaging disparity between children's and teachers' linguistic practices because of their identities and home languages, my study begins filling this gap by creating space during phonics instruction for children who self-identify as Latine or Arab to use their rich linguistic repertoires, including their home languages, as assets to support their FLD in the classroom. One way Di•VERSE Literacy incorporated Spanish was through the *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) read-aloud and the tongue ticklers. In this case, children had the opportunity to use their listening, speaking, and reading skills while having space to include their writing skills when creating their tongue ticklers and self-portraits in Spanish. Although there is a Black Language disparity between children's and teachers' linguistic practices because of their identities and home languages, my study begins filling this gap by creating space during phonics instruction for children who self-identify as Black to use their home language to advance their literacy development in relatable ways. In this case, children had the opportunity to use Black Language through the four literacy domains for their purposes

during the teaching and learning exchange. In response to these two linguistic disparities, Di•VERSE Literacy expanded academic language used during phonics instruction to include additional languages such as Spanish and Black Language to support children's literacy development while creating space for them to value themselves including their linguistic practices. Specifically, my study begins filling gaps in the research literature by challenging deficit-based perspectives on Black Language and additional (English) languages in US schools.

Although there is a Hip Hop disparity between children's and teachers' cultural experiences due to many teachers' limited understanding of commercial rap, my study begins filling this gap by creating space for teachers to become familiar with additional aspects of Hip Hop culture through Di•VERSE Literacy's curriculum design. In this case, teachers can become more familiar with Hip Hop through classroom resources such as the song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, and the self-portraits that included Hip Hop fashion and graffiti that incorporated developmentally appropriate lyrics and aesthetics for children to advance their literacy learning in a culturally familiar way. Although children and teachers place different values on the definition of literacy, and many teachers implement color-blindness and melting pot approaches during literacy instruction, my study begins filling this gap by creating space for children to engage in culturally responsive approaches during phonics instruction. In this case, teachers can expand their definitions of literacy when implementing Di•VERSE Literacy by understanding children's definition of literacy that is racially and culturally influenced and influences their literacy experiences in the classroom. In response to these Hip Hop and literacy disparities, Di•VERSE Literacy expanded literacy norms and expectations to incorporate children's perspectives and experiences that were racially and culturally influenced so that they could engage in a teaching and learning exchange that was humanizing and compassionate.

Specifically, my study contributes new insights about Hip Hop education in early childhood settings by demonstrating how Hip Hop can serve as a culturally sustaining framework for PAI.

At the conclusion of the study, specifically the end of the yo mama farewell lesson, children got in line to go to their elective, art class. As children got in line, a few children, including Chris, Shayla, and Eli, shared a few closing words with me as we hugged. When Ms. Kos returned to the classroom and we checked in for the last time, she ended the study by stating, "The kids were engaged. I learned a lot. It was a beautiful study." As a teacher and researcher, I observed many beginning readers and writers in kindergarten and first grade who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color and who led me to conduct this study by examining the intersection of culturally responsive education and FLI, specifically PA. Children in my former kindergarten and first grade classrooms inspired me to design a culturally responsive rap and Hip Hop FL intervention to provide children with similar identities, home languages, and lived experiences attending these grades with PAI that centers their identities and experiences which is typically missing in FLI in US schools. While the study provided children in the class with culturally responsive, joyful, and equitable learning experiences and Ms. Kos with opportunities to advance her understanding of culturally responsive education, the study provided me the opportunity to co-teach along with Ms. Kos through my curriculum design which was a heartwarming and joyful experience.

The findings suggest that although many children who self-identify as Black, Brown, and People of Color are required to engage in PAI as mandated by their school districts, children are ready to engage in FLI that will allow them to see and hear themselves in the classroom including their home languages to advance their PAS and beginning decoding and encoding development or reading and writing. They are ready to see their cultures and races and the

cultures and races of their peers with whom they share the world in literacy curriculum materials during phonics instruction. Considering children are ready to see their cultures and races and the cultures and races of their peers in literacy curriculum materials during phonics instruction now, children are also ready to continue seeing their cultures and races and the cultures and races of their peers in literacy curriculum materials during literacy instruction well into the future.

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APPENDIX A: UNIT OVERVIEW, ASSESSMENT, AND LESSONS

Di•VERSE Literacy: A Culturally Responsive Rap and Hip Hop Phonemic Awareness Intervention

Michigan K-12 Standards English Language Arts Reading: Foundational Skills (K-3)[3]

Kindergarten

2d. Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.* (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.)

3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

First Grade

2b. Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.

2c. Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds in spoken single-syllable words.

2d. Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).

3b. Decode regularly spelled one-syllable word.

Weekly Overview

Week 1 | Days 1-5 | Intro & Beginning Sounds

Week 2 | Days 6-10 | Beginning Sounds

Week 3 | Days 11-15 | Beginning Sounds

Unit Theme and Culturally Diverse Children's Literature

Unit 1 | Cool Cuts Happy Hair | Identifying Beginning Sounds

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut (Barnes, 2017)

Hair Story (Ramos, 2021)

Cool Cuts (Roe, 2021)

Happy Hair (Roe, 2020)

Rap and Hip Hop Song

Unit 1 | Cool Cuts Happy Hair | Beginning Sounds

[3] Michigan's K-12 Standards are parallel to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (2021).

Name: _____ Pre-Assessment Date: _____ Post-Assessment Date: _____

Di•VERSE Literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Beginning Reading and Writing Assessment

Initial Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Beginning Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I'll say a word and you'll say the first sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word *rip*, you would say the beginning sound is /r/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
mad	/m/		
locs	/l/		
nose	/n/		_____/7
wet	/w/		
bad	/b/		
star	/s/		
shop	/sh/		

Final Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Ending Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I'll say a word and you'll say the last sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word *rip*, you would say the last sound is /p/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
kiss	/s/		

comb	/m/		_____/7
tail	/l/		
sun	/n/		
hat	/t/		
cap	/p/		
brush	/sh/		

Medial Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Middle Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, “I’ll give you a word and you’ll say the middle sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word *cat*, you would tell me the middle sound is /ă/. If we get to a tricky word, we’ll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?” Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child’s Response	Notes and Results
cut	/ŭ/		_____/7
fab	/ă/		
pom	/ŏ/		
bet	/ĕ/		
lit	/ĭ/		
cape	/ā/		
dope	/ō/		

Blending Phonemes (Sliding Through Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, “I’ll give you some sounds. Then you’ll slide through the sounds to give me the word. For example, if I give you the sounds /l/ /ĭ/ /p/, you would tell me the word is *lip*. If we get to a tricky word, we’ll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?” Please indicate if children are providing sounds, letter names, or words. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Phonemes	Correct Response	Child’s Response	Notes and Results
/ă/ /t/	at		_____/7
/b/ /ō/	bow		
/j/ /ĕ/ /l/	gel		
/m/ /ŏ/ /m/	mom		
/h/ /ĭ/ /p/	hip		
/d/ /ă/ /p/	dap		
/p/ /ŭ/ /f/	puff		

Segmenting Phonemes (Separating Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, “I’ll give you the word. Then you’ll give me the sounds. For example, if I gave you the word *lip*, you would tell me the sounds are /l/ /ĭ/ /p/. If we get to a tricky word, we’ll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?” Please indicate if children are providing the sounds or the letter names for each sound in the word. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child’s Response	Notes and Results
low	/l/ /ō/		
up	/ŭ/ /p/		
red	/r/ /ĕ/ /d/		

cap	/k/ /ă/ /p/		_____/7
hit	/h/ /ĭ/ /t/		
love	/l/ /ŭ/ /v/		
waves	/w/ /ā/ /v/ /s/		

Decoding (Reading Words)

Directions: Say, “When you’re ready, you can begin reading the list of words. If you get to a tricky word, we’ll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?” If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Child’s Response	Word	Child’s Response	Notes and Results
if		kid		
at		bun		
mad		best		_____/10
top		locs		
dab		cuts		

Encoding (Spelling Words)

Directions: Say, “When you’re ready, you’ll spell some words. If we get to a tricky word, we’ll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?” If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Child’s Response	Word	Child’s Response	Notes and Results
as		pat		

in		box		
not		next		
win		just		_____/10
rub		hand		

Number of Correct Responses

Being introduced to the targeted skill: 0-4/7 or 0-6/10 responses

Exploring the targeted skill: 5/7 or 7/10 responses

Displaying the targeted skill: 6-7/7 or 8-10/10 responses

Week 1 | Days 1 - 5 | Introduction and Beginning Sounds

Week 1| Day 1: Playing With Familiar Sounds + Reviewing ABCs

Week 1| Day 2: More Playing With Familiar Sounds + Reviewing ABCs

Week 1| Day 3: Finish Reviewing ABCs

Week 1| Day 4: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Week 1| Day 5: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud With iSpy, Tongue Ticklers, & Identifying Beginning Sounds Worksheet

Week 1| Day 1: Playing With Familiar Sounds + Reviewing ABCs

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize familiar sounds.

I can recognize the sequence of familiar sounds.

I can segment and blend familiar sounds.

I can recognize letters and the sounds they commonly spell.

Material(s)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 1, Days 1 - 5)

Time

25 minutes

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 1, Day 1, slides 2 - 50) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #2

- Say, **"This school year, we'll continue becoming great readers and writers. Great readers and writers pay close attention to the sounds they hear in words. First, we'll practice paying close attention to the sounds we might hear at home or places in our community. I'll play some sounds, we'll think about what the sounds are, the order of the sounds, and the place where we might hear the sounds."**
- Children can name the sounds and/or mimic the sounds.

SLIDE #3

- Say, **"To help us focus on our hearing, we will close our eyes. Then, I'll play the sounds."** Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sounds did you hear?"**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk (in any order: *clippers, scissors, chatter)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support, if necessary, as well as prompts.

SLIDE #4

- Say, **"We'll listen again. This time, think about the first sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the first sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*scissors)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #5

- Say, **"We'll listen again. Think about the last sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the last sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*clippers*).
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #6

- Say, **"This time, think about the sound you hear in the middle. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*chatter)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary. Show the next slide.

SLIDE #7

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds with breaks in between and the sounds will be in a different order. Then you'll quickly put the first, middle, and last sounds together to make one smooth. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Make one smooth sound with the three sounds in order."**
- Provide children time to respond (*chatter, clippers, scissors*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary. Show the next slide.

SLIDE #8

- Say, **"We'll listen again. Then you'll tell me the order of the sounds with breaks in between, so the first, middle, and last sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear first?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*clippers)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #9

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*scissors)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #10

- Say, **"What sound did you hear last?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*chatter)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #11

- Say, **"Where do you think you might go and hear these sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*barbershop)*.
- Provide children with prompting and support for children to figure out the location.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #12

- Say, **"Yes, the barbershop. We'll do the same thing with sounds from another place some of us may go in our community."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #13

- Say, **"Tell me the sounds you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play slide.
- Say, **"What sounds did you hear?"**
- Provide children time to respond (in any order: *hair spray, hair dryer, hair washing/sink/bowl).*
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support, if necessary, as well as prompts.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #14

- Say, "**We'll listen again. Think about the first sound you hear. Close your eyes."**

- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the first sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair dryer)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #15

- Say, "**We'll listen again. Think about the last sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the last sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair spray*).
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #16

- Say, "**We'll listen again. Think about the middle sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(hair washing/sink/bowl)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #17

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds with breaks in between and the sounds will be in a different order. Then you'll quickly put the first, middle, and last sounds together to make one smooth sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.

- Say, **"Make one smooth sound with the three sounds in order."**
- Provide children time to respond *(hair spray, hair washing/sink/bowl, hair dryer*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #18

- Say, **"We'll listen again. Then you'll tell me the order of the sounds with breaks in between, so the first, middle, and last sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear first?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair washing/sink/bowl)*. Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #19

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair spray)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #20

- Say, **"What sound did you hear last?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair dryer)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #21

- Say, **"Where do you think you might go and hear these sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hair salon, beauty salon, hairdresser)*.
- Provide children with prompting and support for children to figure out the location.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #22

- Say, **"Yes, the hair salon. Remember, we said that great readers pay close attention to sounds in words to help them read and write. The skills we just used to figure out the barbershop and beauty salon are the same skills we'll use to help us read and write."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #23

- Say, **"Now we'll review the alphabet. We can use the images on the wall cards and our alphabet chart to help us read and write. We'll start with the first picture."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #24

- Say, **"A round, thickly curled hairdo typically worn by Black people is a what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*afro)*.
- Say, **"Afro begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ă/)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ă/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*a)*.

- Say, **"Yes, "a" spells /ă/ as in afro."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #25

- Say, **"B boying or another Hip Hop name for this type of dance is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*breakdancing)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Breakdancing begins with two sounds, /br/. What two sounds do you hear?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/b/ /r/)*.
- Say, **"B boying and breakdancing begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/b/)*.
- Say, **"*What letter spells /b/?*"**
- Provide children time to respond (*b)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "b" spells /b/ as in b boying and breakdancing. Boombox and box also begin with /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #26

- Say, **"A head ring worn by kings and queens to remind them they are royalty is called a what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*crown)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Crown begins with two sounds, /kr/. What two sounds do you hear?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/k/ /r/)*.
- Say, **"What's the first sound what sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*/k/)*.
- Say, **"What's one letter that spells /k/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*c)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "c" spells /k/ as in crown."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #27

- Say, **"One way friends might greet each other is by giving each other what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*dap)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"One Hip Hop dance Migos made popular is called the dab."**
- Provide children time to respond (*dab)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Dap and dab begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/d/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /d/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*d)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "d" spells /d/ as in dap and dab."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #28

- Say, **"When fans get to see their favorite singer perform like Beyoncé, how do they feel?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*excited)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.

- Say, **“Excited begins with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ĕ/)*.
- Say, **“What letter spells /ĕ/?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*e)*.
- Say, **“Yes, “e” spells /ĕ/ as in excited.”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #29

- Say, **“The girl’s style on the left is fly, fresh, and what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*fire)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“What letter spells /f/?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*f)*.
- Say, **“Yes, “f” spells /f/ as in fire.”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #30

- Say, **“When people wear metal on a row of their teeth, they are wearing what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*grill)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“A Hip Hop style of writing and art is called what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*graffiti)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“Grill and grafiti begin with two sounds, /gr/. What two sounds do you hear?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/g/ /r/)*.

- Say, **“What’s the first sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/g/)*.
- Say, “What letter spells /g/?”
- Provide children time to respond (*g)*.
- Say, **“Yes, “g” spells /g/ as in grill and graffiti.”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #31

- Say, **“She is wearing what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*hoops, hoodie, headphones, hijab)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“Hoops, hoodie, headphones, and hijab begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/h/)*.
- Say, **“What letter spells /h/?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*h)*.
- Say, **“Yes, “h” spells /h/ as in hoops, hoodie, headphones, and hijab.”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #32

- Say, **“The kids are playing different types of what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*instruments)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“Instruments begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ĭ/)*.
- Say, **“What letter spells /ĭ/?”**

- Provide children time to respond (*i)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "i" spells /ĭ/ as in instruments."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #33

- Say, **"The girls like to do what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*jump rope)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Jump rope begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/j/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /j/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*j)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "j" spells /j/ as in jump rope."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #34

- Say, **"Some people call men and boys what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*kings)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Kings begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/k/)*.
- Say, **"What's one letter that spells /k/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*k)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "k" spells /k/ as in kings."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #35

- Say, **"A hairstyle with chucks of hair locked together is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*locs)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Hearts represent what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*love)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Locs and love begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/l/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /l/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*l)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "l" spells /l/ as in locs and love."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #36

- Say, **"Missy and Meg are rapping into the what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*mics)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"These symbols represent what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*music)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Mics and music begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/m/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /m/?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*m)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "m" spells /m/ as in mics and music."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #37

- Say, **"Some concerts happen at what time of the day?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*night)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Night begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/n/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /n/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*n)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "n" spells /n/ as in night."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #38

- Say, **"Who's the DJ in the children's book President Obama is reading to the children?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*the octopus)*.
- Say, **"Octopus begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ŏ/)*. Stretch the sound.
- Say, **"Yes, "o" spells /ŏ/ as in octopus."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #39

- Say, **"One way people say goodbye with a hand gesture is with what sign?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*peace sign)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Peace begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/p/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /p/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*p)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "p" spells /p/ as in peace."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #40

- Say, **"Some people call women and girls what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*queen)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Queen Latifah and Queen B begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/kw/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /kw/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*q)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "q" spells /kw/ as in queen."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #41

- Say, **"When people are on the road, they might listen to music on what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*radio)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Radio begins with what sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*/r/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /r/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*r)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "r" spells /r/ as in radio."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #42

- Say, **"Sometimes, people listen to music through big, loud what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*speakers)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Some people get around big cities by taking what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*subway)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Speakers begin with two sounds, /sp/. What two sounds do you hear?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/s/ /p/)*.
- Say, **"Speakers and subway begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/s/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /s/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*s)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "s" spells /s/ as in speakers and subway."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #43

- Say, **"One hairdo where people wrap two pieces of hair together is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*twists)*.

- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"DJs play records or music on what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*turntable)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Twists begin with two sounds, /tw/. What sounds do you hear? What's the first sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/t/ /w/)*.
- Say, **"Twists and turntable begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/t/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /t/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*t)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "t" spells /t/ as in twists and turntable."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #44

- Say, **"When it's raining, you can stand under Rihanna's what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*umbrella)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Umbrella begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ŭ/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ŭ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*u)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "u" spells /ŭ/ as in umbrella."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #45

- Say, **"Black Violin mix Hip Hop with classical music. Kev Marcus is playing what on the left?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*violin)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Will B. is playing what on the right?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*viola)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Violin and viola begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/v/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /v/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*v)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "v" spells /v/ as in violin and viola."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #46

- Say, **"People like Hip Hop all around what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*world)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"World begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/w/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /w/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*w)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "w" spells /w/ as in world."**

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #47

- Say, **"Some break dancers used what to dance on?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*cardboard box)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Box ends with what sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ks/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ks/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*x)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "x" spells /ks/ at the end of box."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #48

- Say, **"Sometimes, Black Language speakers tell jokes about who?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*your mama; "yo" mama is also acceptable)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Yo and your begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/y/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /y/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*y)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "y" spells /y/ as in yo or your mama."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #49

- Say, **"One type of music Black people created is called what?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*jazz)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Jazz ends with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/z/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /z/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*z)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "z" spells /z/ at the end of jazz."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #50

- Say, **"So remember, you can use the wall cards and your alphabet chart to help you read and write. Next time, we'll continue playing with sounds we know from our community and reviewing our wall cards."**

Week 1| Day 2: Playing With More Familiar Sounds + Reviewing ABCs

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize familiar sounds.

I can recognize the sequence of familiar sounds.

I can segment and blend familiar sounds.

I can recognize letters and the sounds they commonly spell.

Material(s)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 1, Days 1 - 5)

Time

25 minutes

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 1, Day 2, slides 51 - 79) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #52

- Say, **"Remember we said that great readers pay close attention to the sounds they hear in words. Last time, we practiced paying close attention to sounds we might hear at home or in places in our community like the barber shop or beauty salon. Today, we'll do the same thing. We'll think about what the sounds are, the order of the sounds, and where we might hear the sounds."**
- Children can name the sounds and/or mimic the sounds.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #53

- Say, **"To help us focus on our hearing, we will close our eyes. So, close your eyes, and I'll play the sounds."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sounds did you hear?"**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk (in any order: *siren, car, music)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #53

- Say, **"We will listen to the sounds again. This time, think about the first sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the first sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*music)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #54

- Say, **"What was the last sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*siren*).
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #55

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*car)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary. Show the next slide.

SLIDE #56

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds with breaks in between. Then you'll tell me the order of the sounds together to make one smooth sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Tell me one smooth sound with the three sounds in order."**
- Provide children time to respond (*car, siren, music)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #57

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds. Then you'll tell me the order of the sounds with breaks in between, so the first, middle, and last sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear first?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*siren*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #58

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*music*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #59

- Say, **"What sound did you hear last?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*car*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #60

- Say, **"Where do you think you might go and hear those sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*a city or a neighborhood)*.
- Provide children with prompting and support for children to figure out the location.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #61

- Say, **"Yes, a city or a neighborhood. We'll do the same thing one more time but with sounds from another place some of us may go in our community."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #62

- Say, **"Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sounds did you hear?"**
- Provide children time to respond (in any order: *kids playing, dog barking, ball bouncing)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #63

- Say, **"We'll listen to the sounds again. This time, think about the first sound you hear. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What was the first sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(dog barking)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #64

- Say, **"What was the last sound you heard?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(ball bouncing)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #65

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(kids playing)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #66

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds with breaks in between. This time, you will put the first, middle, and last sounds together to make one smooth sound without any breaks in between. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Tell me the smooth sound with the three sounds in order."**
- Provide children time to respond (*ball bouncing, kids playing, dog barking)*.
- Replay the slide to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #67

- Say, **"We'll listen to the same sounds. Then you'll tell me the order of the sounds with breaks in between, so the first, middle, and the last sound. Close your eyes."**
- Play the slide.
- Say, **"What sound did you hear first?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*kids playing*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #68

- Say, **"What sound did you hear in the middle?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*ball bouncing*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #69

- Say, **"What sound did you hear last?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*dog barking*).
- Replay the slide again to provide children with more support if necessary.

SLIDE #70

- Say, **"Where do you think you might go and hear those sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*park or playground)*.
- Provide children with prompting and support for children to figure out the location.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #71

- Say, **"Yes, a park or a playground. Remember we said great readers and writers pay close attention to the sounds they hear in words to read and write using the skills we just practiced. So, we'll continue using these skills to help us learn to read and write too."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #72

- Say, **"Now we'll review the alphabet and the common sounds the letters spell using many words from Black Language and Hip Hop culture. Remember, you can use the wall cards and your alphabet chart to help you read and spell sounds in words."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #73

- Say, **"A round, thickly curled hairdo typically worn by Black people is what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*afro)*.
- Say, **"Afro begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ă/)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ă/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*a)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "a" spells /ă/ as in afro. Here are some famous people who wear afros and we'll see them again in one of our books later on. Can you think of anyone else who wears an afro?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- *Say,* **"Can you think of another word that begins with /ă/?"**
- Allow children to share their thoughts.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #74

- Say, **"B boying or another Hip Hop name for this type of dance is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*breakdancing)*.

- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Breakdancing begins with two sounds, /br/. What two sounds do you hear? What's the first sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/b/ /r/)*.
- Say, **"B boying and breakdancing begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/b/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /b/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*b)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "b" spells /b/ as in b boying and breakdancing. Do you know any breakdancing moves? Would you like to show us? Can you think of another word that begins with /b/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #75

- Say, **"A head ring worn by kings and queens to remind them they are royalty is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*crown)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Crown begins with two sounds, /kr/. What two sounds do you hear? What's the first sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/k/)*.
- Say, **"What's one letter that spells /k/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*c)*.

- Say, **"Yes, "c" spells /k/ as in crown. Here's Queen Latifah and Queen B in their African inspired crowns. Have you seen them before? Where did you see them?"**
- Say, **"Can you think of another word that begins with /k/ spelled with c?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #76

- Say, **"One way friends might greet each other is by giving each other what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*dap)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"One Hip Hop dance Migos made popular is what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*dab)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Dap and dab begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/d/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /d/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*d)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "d" spells /d/ as in dap and dab. Let's see how some people dap each other."**
- Play the clip.
- Say, **"Let's dap a classmate sitting near us. Would anyone like to show us?"**
- Allow some children to dap a friend or classmate in front of the class.
- Say, **"Can you think of another word that begins with /d/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #77

- Say, **"When fans get to see their favorite artist perform like Queen Bey, how do they feel?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*excited)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Excited begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ĕ/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ĕ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*e)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "e" spells /ĕ/ as in excited. Who's someone you would be excited to see in concert? Can you think of another word that begins with /ĕ/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #78

- Say, **"The girl's style on the left is fly, fresh, and what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*fire)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Fire begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/f/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /f/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*f)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "f" spells /f/ as in fire. Can you think of another word that begins with /f/?"** Show the next slide.

SLIDE #79

- Say, **“We’ll pause here for today. Next time, we’ll continue with G.”**

Week 1| Day 3: Finish Reviewing ABCs

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize letters and the sounds they commonly spell.

Material(s)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 1, Days 1 - 5)

Time

25 minutes

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 1, Day 3, slides 80 - 101) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #80

- Say, **"Today, we'll continue reviewing the alphabet and the sounds the letters typically spell using the wall cards."**

SLIDE #81

- Say, **"When people wear metal on a row of their teeth, they are wearing what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*grill)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"A Hip Hop style of writing and art is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*graffiti)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.

- Say, **"Grill and grafiti begin with two sounds, /gr/. What two sounds do you hear? What's the first sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/g/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /g/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*g)*.
- Say, "**Yes, "g" spells /g/ as in grill and graffiti. Basquiat is Hip Hop's favorite artist. He uses this crown to represent that he's the king of the art world. We'll use a similar one when we make our self-portraits for our class book later on. Can you find his crown in the graffiti? Can you think of another word that begins with /g/?***"*
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #82

- Say, **"She is wearing what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*hoodie, headphones, hijab, hoop earrings)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Hoodie, headphones, hijab and hoops begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/h/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /h/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*h)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "h" spells /h/ as in hoodie, headphones, hijab and hops. Can you think of another word that begins with /h/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #82

- Say, **"The kids are playing different types of what?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*instruments)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Instruments begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ĭ/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ĭ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*i)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "i" spells /ĭ/ as in instruments. If you could play an instrument, which instrument would you like to play and why? Can you think of another word that begins with /ĭ/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #84

- Say, **"Some kids like to what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*jump rope)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Jump rope begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/j/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /j/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*j)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "j" spells /j/ as in jump rope. Thumbs up if you like to jump rope. Do anyone know any jump rope rhymes?"**
- Say, "**Can you think of another word that begins with /j/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #85

- Say, **"Some people refer to men and boys as what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*kings)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Kings begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/k/)*.
- Say, **"What's one letter that spells /k/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*k)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "k" spells /k/ as in king. Can you think of another word that begins with /k/ spelled with k?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #86

- Say, **"A hairstyle with chucks of hair locked together is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*locs)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Hearts represent what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*love)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Locs and love begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/l/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /l/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*l)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "l" spells /l/ as in locs and love. Can you think of another word that**

begins with /l/?"

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #87

- Say, **"Missy and Meg are rapping into the what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*mics)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"The notes represent what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*music)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Mics and music begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/m/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /m/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*m)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "m" spells /m/ as in mics and music. Can you think of another word that begins with /m/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #88

- Say, **"Some concerts happen at what time of the day?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*night)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Night begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/n/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /n/?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*n)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "n" spells /n/ as in night. Can you think of another word that begins with /n/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #89

- Say, **"Who's the DJ in the children's book former President Obama is reading to the children?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*the octopus)*.
- Say, **"Octopus begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ŏ/)*. Stretch the sound.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ŏ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*o*).
- Say, **"Yes, "o" spells /ŏ/ as in octopus. Can you think of any words that begin with /ŏ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #90

- Say, **"One way people might say goodbye with a hand gesture is with what sign?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*peace sign)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Peace begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/p/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /p/?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*p)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "p" spells /p/ as in peace. Can you think of another word that begins with /p/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #91

- Say, **"Some people refer to women and girls as what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*queens)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Queen Latifah and Queen B begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/kw/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /kw/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*q)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "q" spells /kw/ as in Queen Latifiah and Queen. Can you think of another word that begins with /kw/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #92

- Say, **"When people are on the road, they might listen to music on the what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*radio)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Radio begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/r/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /r/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*r)*.

- Say, **“Yes, “r” spells /r/ as in radio. Can you think of another word that begins with /r/?”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #93

- Say, **“Sometimes, people might listen to music through big, loud what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*speakers)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“Some people get around urban intensive communities by taking the what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*subway)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **“Speakers begin with two sounds, /sp/. What two sounds do you hear? What’s the first sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/s/ /p/)*.
- Say, **“Speakers and subway begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*/s/)*.
- Say, **“What letter spells /s/?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*s)*.
- Say, **“Yes, “s” spells /s/ as in speakers and subway. Can you think of another word that begins with /s/?”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #94

- Say, **“One hairdo where people wrap two pieces of hair together is called what?”**
- Provide children time to respond (*twists)*.

- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"DJs play records or music on what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*turntable)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Twists begin with two sounds, /tw/. What two sounds do you hear? What's the first sound? Twists and turntable begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/t/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /t/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*t)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "t" spells /t/ as in twists and turntable. Can you think of another word that begins with /t/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #95

- Say, **"When it's raining, you can stand with Rihanna under her what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*umbrella)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Umbrella begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ŭ/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ŭ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*u)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "u" spells /ŭ/ as in umbrella. Can you think of another word that begins with /ŭ/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #96

- Say, **"Black Violin mix Hip Hop with classical music. To the left, Kev Marcus is playing what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*violin)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"To the right, Will B. is playing what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*viola)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Violin and viola begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/v/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /v/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*v)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "v" spells /v/ as in violin and viola. Now, we'll watch Black Violin playing the violin and viola."**
- Play the clip.
- Say, **"Did you hear how they mixed the two types of music together? Can you think of another word that begins with /v/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #97

- Say, **"Hip Hop has influenced people all around what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*world)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"World begins with what sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond (*/w/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /w/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*w)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "w" spells /w/ as in world. Can you think of another word that begins with /w/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #98

- Say, **"Some breakdancers used what to dance on?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*cardboard box)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Box ends with what sounds?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/ks/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /ks/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*x)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "x" spells /ks/ at the end of box. Can you think of another that ends or begins with /ks/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #99

- Say, **"Sometimes, Black Language speakers might tell jokes about who?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*your mama; some kids may say "yo" which is acceptable)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Let's listen to some yo(ur) mama compliments."**

- Play the clip.
- Say, **"Your and yo begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/y/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /y/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*y)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "y" spells /y/ as in your mama. Can you think of another word that begins with /y/?"** Show the next slide.

SLIDE #100

- Say, **"One type of music Black people created back in the 20th century is called what?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*jazz)*.
- Repeat the word stretching the sounds in the word to provide children additional support.
- Say, **"Jazz ends with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/z/)*.
- Say, **"What letter spells /z/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*z)*.
- Say, **"Yes, "z" spells /z/ at the end of jazz. Can you think of another word that ends or begins with /z/?"** Show the next slide.

SLIDE #101

- Say, **"So remember, you can use the wall cards and your alphabet chart to help with reading and writing. We'll pause her today. Next time, we'll continue thinking about the beginning sounds in words and we'll listen to the story, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*."**

Week 1| Day 4: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut (Barnes, 2017)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 1, Days 1 - 5)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 1, Day 3, slides 102 - 133) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #102

- Play the clip.
- "On the first day of school, we entered our classroom as kings and queens. While some royals wear crowns, we wear our crowns through our hair. Some of us like to wear our hair long, short, or somewhere in between. Some of us like to wear our hair up, down, or free. Sometimes, we might add bows, bobos, and designs. We can style our hair ourselves, our families style our hair for us, or our barbers and hairstylists style our hair for us too! When our crowns are styled, and we look in the mirror, we feel "magnificent,

flawless, like royalty," like the boy in our story when he visits the barbershop and gets a fresh cut that makes him feel like a king" (Barnes, 2017, p. 26).

SLIDES #103-117

- Say, **"Now, we'll listen to the story."**
- Play the slides to listen to the read-aloud of *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017).

SLIDE #118

- Say, **"We'll listen to the story one more time. We'll listen carefully to the sounds we hear in the words like we did when we were listening to sounds in our home and community like the barbershop and beauty salon. When we recognize the sounds in words, these skills will help us learn to read and spell more words."**
- Listen to *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) in the slides, focusing on specific words to support children in recognizing the beginning sounds.
- While listening to the following pages, ask children:

SLIDE #120

- Listen to the page (top).
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/mmmm//ī/** (***my***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/mmmm//ăn/** (***man***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in my and man?"**
- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Listen to the page (bottom).

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #121

- Listen to the pages (top).
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/sssshhhh//ādz/** (***shades***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/sssshhhh/ /īn/** (***shine***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in shades and shine?"**
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #122

- Listen to the page (top).
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/ssss//lō/** (***slow***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/ssss//tĕ-dē/** (***steady***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/ssss//wăg-ger/** (*swagger*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in slow, steady, and swagger?"**
- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Listen to the page.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #123

- Listen to the page.

- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/rrrr//ōs/** (***rows***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/rrrr//ĭp-pŭls/** (***ripples***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in rows and ripples?"**
- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #126

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/llll//ŏks/** (***locs***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/llll//ī-fē/** (***life***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/llll//īn/** (***line***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in locs, life, and line?"**
- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #127

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/mmmm//ĭr-rĕr/** (***mirror***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/mmmm//ĕ-dŭl/** (***medal***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in mirror and medal?"**

- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #129

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/mmmmŭ-th-r/** (***mother***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/mmmmă-dr/** (***matters***; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in mother and matters?**"
- Repeat the words to provide children with more support if necessary.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #133

- Say, **"Who can tell us what the story Crown was about? Where did the boy go? What did he get? How did the haircut make him feel? Next, we'll listen to a song that includes some of the hairstyles we just read about that can make other people feel good too. First, we'll listen carefully, and then we'll do our best to sing along. We also want to listen carefully because some parts in the song will ask us to think about the beginning sound in some of the words."**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair in the Slides.
- Reference the lyrics on the next page to support children's engagement with recognizing beginning sounds.

Week 1| Day 5: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud With iSpy, Tongue Ticklers, & Worksheet

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut (Barnes, 2017)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 1, Days 1 - 5)

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut Beginning Sounds Worksheet (in the lesson plan)

Children's crayons

Children's pencils

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

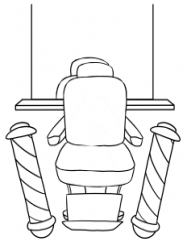
Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Name: _____

Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the picture's name to complete the sentence. After, children will decide if both pictures' names begin with the same sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same sound, children will draw an "x" on both pictures to indicate they do not. Children will take out one crayon.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut Matching Beginning Sounds

By: Derrick Barnes and Illustrated by: Gordon C. James

1. When it's your turn in the  , you stand at attention and forget about who you were when you walked through that .

2. The whole will be from the rows and rows of ripples. You'll have more waves on your head than the Atlantic Ocean.

3. (Shout out to my and patience.) There's a to the left of you with a faux-hawk, deep part, skin fade.

4. There are two dudes, one with , the other with .

5. And when you see the cut yourself, in that handheld , you'll smile a really big smile. That's the you that you love the most. That's the you that wins-everything. That's the gold you.

6. Every person in the shop will rise to their and give you a round of applause for being so !

7. You'll put the in his hand without even expecting change back. Tip that !

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 1, Day 5, slides 134 - 178) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #134

- Say, **"Last time, we read a story about a boy's visit to the barbershop and he got a fresh cut that made him feel like a king. Today, we'll listen to our story except this time, we'll play iSpy. We'll look for things in the illustrations that begin with the sound I give us."**
- Listen to *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Barnes, 2017) in Black Language in the Slides.
- After listening to the pages:
- **SLIDE #136**: Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /b/."** (boy)
- **SLIDE #137**: Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /k/ or /h/."** (cap or hat)
- **SLIDE #138**: Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /s/."** (star)
- **SLIDE #139**: Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /n/."** (nose)
- **SLIDE #140:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /f/."** (football)
- **SLIDE #141:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /ī/."** (iPhone)
- **SLIDE #142:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /m/."** (mustache)
- **SLIDE #143:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /g/."** (glasses)
- **SLIDE #144:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /m/."** (mirror)

- **SLIDE #145:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /t/."** (tie)
- **SLIDE #146:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /k/."** (kiss)
- **SLIDE #147:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /k/."** (cape, clippers, cap)
- **SLIDE #148:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /sh/."** (shoe)
- **SLIDE #149:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /p/."** (pants)
- **SLIDE #150**
- Say, **"Next, we'll listen to some tongue ticklers. Tongue ticklers are sentences with a lot of words that begin with the same beginning sound. Our tongue ticklers will use some of the words from our story. We'll listen to the tongue tickler first, and then repeat them. Then, I want us to think about the sound most of the words begin with in the sentence."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #151

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **My man's masterpieces make me melt in the mirror.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/m/)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #152

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **Gorgeous girls giggle, glancin' at this good-lookin' guy.**

- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/g/)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #153

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **This do-rag I'm rockin' reveals rich rows n' ripples runnin' rampant.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/r/)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #154

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- **The dope designs on dude's dome are dazzlin' n' delightful.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/d/)
- Say, **"Next time, we'll work together to make phrases with two words that begin with the same beginning sound. Today, we'll do one more thing with our story."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #155

- Complete the *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Beginning Sounds Worksheet
- Say, **"We'll complete a worksheet together using some of the words from our story. As I read some of the pages, you'll help me complete my sentences by saying the picture's name. Afterward, we'll decide if both pictures' names begin with the same or different beginning sounds. We'll go over the pictures first."**

SLIDES #156-169

- Review the pictures' names from the story to provide children additional support before beginning the worksheet using the slides.
- If children need support, read the clues on the slides to help children name the pictures correctly.

SLIDE #170

- Worksheet Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the picture's name to complete the sentence. Afterwards, children will decide if both pictures' names begin with the same sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same sound, children will draw an "x" on both pictures to indicate they do not.
- **Tell children to take out one crayon and a pencil.**
- Complete the worksheet together.

SLIDE #171

- **#1: When it's your turn in the** *chair*, **you stand at attention and forget about who you were when you walked through that** *door*.
- Say, **"Chair begins with what sound?"** /ch/
- Say, **"Door begins with what sound?"** /d/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (different sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (no)
- Say, **"We'll put an X on them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #172

- **#2: The whole *school* will be *sick* from the rows and rows of ripples. You'll have more waves on your head than the Atlantic Ocean.**
- Say, **"School begins with what sound?"** /s/
- Say, **"Sick begins with what sound?"** /s/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)
- Say, **"Yes, we'll color them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #173

- **#3: (Shout out to my *do-rag* and patience.) There's a *dude* to the left of you with a faux-hawk, deep part, skin fade.**
- Say, **"Do-rag begins with what sound?"** /d/
- Say, **"Dude begins with what sound?"** /d/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)
- Say, **"Yes, we'll color them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #174

- **#4: There are two dudes, one with *locs*, the other with *cornrows*.**
- Say, **"Locs begin with what sound?"** /l/
- Say, **"Cornrows begin with what sound?"** /k/

- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (different sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (no)
- Say, **"We'll put an X on them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #175

- **#5: And when you see the cut yourself, in that handheld** *mirror*, **you'll smile a really big smile. That's the you that you love the most. That's the you that wins– everything. That's the gold** *medal* **you.**
- Say, **"Mirror begins with what sound?"** /m/
- Say, **"Medal begins with what sound?"** /m/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)
- Say, **"Yes, we'll color them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #176

- **#6: Every person in the shop will rise to their** *feet* **and give you a round of applause for being so** *FLY*!
- Say, **"Feet begin with what sound?"** /f/
- Say, **"Fly begins with what sound?"** /f/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)
- Say, **"Yes, we'll color them."**

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #177

- **#7: You'll put the** ***money*** **in his hand without even expecting change back. Tip that** ***man*****!**
- Say, **"Money begins with what sound?"** /m/
- Say, **"Man begins with what sound?"** /m/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)
- Say, **"Yes, we'll color them."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #178

- Say, **"Next, we'll listen to our song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, that includes some of the hairstyles we've been reading about. Remember we want to listen carefully because some parts in the song will ask us to think about the beginning sound in some of the words."**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair in the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children's engagement with recognizing beginning sounds.
- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)

Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 2 | Days 6 - 10 | Beginning Sounds

Week 2| Day 6: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud & Kids' Tongue Tickler Phrases

Week 2| Day 7: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Week 2| Day 8: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud With iSpy, Tongue Ticklers, & Identifying Beginning Sounds Worksheet

Week 2| Day 9: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud & Kids' Tongue Tickler Phrases

Week 2| Day 10: Beginning Phoneme Dominoes Matching Game

(illustrations from *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* & *Hair Story*)

Week 2| Day 6: *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* Read-Aloud & Kids' Tongue Tickler Phrases

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut (Barnes, 2017)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 2, Days 6 - 10)

Children's handwriting paper (in the lesson plan)

Children's pencils

Children's crayons

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

SLIDE #19

- Say, **"So one could say long locs. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #20

- Say, **"One could say light locs. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #21

- Say, **"One could say laid which means really good in Black Language to describe the locs so laid locs. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Say, **"In the phrases, long locs, light locs, and laid locs, the two words begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to repeat after you (/l/).
- **Say, "What letter spells the /l/ sound?"**
- Provide children time to repeat after you (l).
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #22

- Say, **"One might challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence and say, LaRon like his long, laid locs. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- **Say, "Most of the words I used begin with what sound?"** (*/l/*)

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #23

- Say, **"These are what?"** (*glasses*)
- Say, **"Glasses begin with what sound?"** (*/g/*)
- Say, **"Let's think of some words that begin with /g/ to name the glasses. What colors begin with /g/? Talk to someone sitting by you."**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk.
- Say, **"Who can share a word with us to name the color the glasses can be that begins with /g/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #24

- Say, **"So one could say green glasses. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #25

- Say, **"One could say gray glasses. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #26

- Say, **"One could say gold glasses. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Say, **"In the phrases, green glasses, gray glasses, and gold glasses, the two words begin with what sound?"** (/g/)

- Say, **“What letter spells the /g/ sound?”** (g)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #27

- Say, “**One might challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence, and say, My grumpy grandma gives me some green glasses. Your turn.”**
- Provide children to repeat after you.
- Say, “**Most of the words I used begin with what sound?”** (*/g/*)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #28

- Say, **“We’ll go over one more together before you create a phrase with your classmates. These are what?”** (*glasses*)
- Say, **“Feet begin with what sound?”** (*/f/*)
- Say, **“Let’s think of some words that begin with /f/ to name our feet. How can we move our feet that begins with /f/? Talk to someone sitting by you.”**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk.
- Say, **“Who can share a word with us to name how our feet can move that begins with /f/?”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #29

- Say, **“So one could say fast feet. Your turn.”**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #30

- Say, **"One could say fun feet. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #31

- Say, **"One could say fresh feet. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Say, **"In the phrases, fast feet, fun feet, and fresh feet, the two words begin with what sound?"** (/f/)
- Say, **"What letter spells the /f/ sound?"** (f)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #32

- Say, **"One might challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence and say, Fatima's fast feet feel the fuzzy rug. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Say, "**Most of the words I used begin with what sound?"** (*/f/*)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #33

- Say, **"Now, you'll work in groups to create a tongue tickler phrase with two words. First, you'll pick a word from our story on the next slide. I'll show you in a second. Next, you'll think of a word that begins with the same sound to name something about it. Everyone in your group will write the two words that begin with the same sound and draw a picture to match like we did with locs, glasses, and feet."** Show the

next slide.

SLIDE #34

- Say, **"Here are some pictures that match words from Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut. Let's go over the names of the pictures. Decide which one you want to focus on as a group."**
- Provide children handwriting paper.
- While children are working, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair twice.
- Once children are finished, provide children time to share their tongue tickler phrases with the class.

Week 2| Day 7: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Hair Story (Ramos, 2021)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 2, Days 6 - 10)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 2, Day 7, slides 35 - 66) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #35

- Play the clip.
- Sometimes we might go to the barbershop or the beauty salon to have our crowns styled, and sometimes our families style their crowns like the little girls' families in the story we will hear. The girls realize their hair likes to be free, and they realize their hair tells the story of the women in their families and represents who the girls are.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDES #36 - #50

- Listen to the book, *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) in the slides.

SLIDE #51

- Say, **"We'll listen again and pay close attention to the beginning sound in some words. Remember, when we recognize the beginning sounds of words, they'll help us to read and write."**
- Listen to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) a second time in the slides a second time in Black Language, focusing on specific words to support children in recognizing the beginning sounds.

SLIDE #52

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/lll-ĭps/** (*lips*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/lll-ŭsh/** (*lush*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in lips and lush?"** (/l/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #53

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/sss-ĭng/** (*sing*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/sss-ō/** (*soar*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in sing and soar?"** (/s/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.

- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #54

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/rrrr//ĕd/** (*red*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/rrrr//īd/** (*ride*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in red and ride?"** (/r/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #57

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/tīt/** (tight)
- **/tĕl/** (tell)
- **/tĭmp/** (temp)
- **We'll try those words one more time since the beginning sound is short and quick.**
- **/tīt/** (tight)
- **/tĕl/** (tell)
- **/tĭmp/** (temp)
- **What's the first sound in tight, tell, and temp?"** (/t/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.

- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Listen to the page.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #58

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/sss-toop/** (*stoop*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/sss-koop/** (*scoop*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in sing and soar?"** (/s/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #62

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you).
- **/fff-āsĭs/** (*faces*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **/fff-rāmd/** (*framed*; stretching the beginning sound)
- **What's the first sound in faces and framed?"** (/f/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #63

- Listen to the page.

- Say, "**This mural celebrates cool Black, Afro-Latinx, and non-Black Latinx people who are known for their accomplishments and their notable hairstyles. Some of them are singers, actors, artists, football players, and activists who work hard for people to be treated fairly and justly."**
- Provide children time to recognize people they might know and share what they know about them.
- Then repeat the name and ask children for the beginning sound of the name.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #65

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Repeat after me** (provide children time to repeat after you)**.**
- **/gĭ͡lz/** (girls)
- **/glīd/** (glide)
- **/glō͡ē/** (glory)
- Say, **"We'll try those words one more time since the beginning sound is short and quick."**
- **/gĭ͡lz/** (girls)
- **/glīd/** (glide)
- **/glō͡ē/** (glory)
- Say, "**What's the first sound in girls, glide, and glory?"** (/g/)
- Repeat the words again to provide children with more support.
- Emphasize the beginning sounds for children.
- Listen to the page.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #66

- **S**ay, **“We’ll listen to our song that includes some of the hairstyles we already read about that can make us and people who know look fly and feel good too.”**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair in the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children’s engagement with recognizing beginning sounds.
- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 2| Day 8: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud With iSpy, Tongue Ticklers, & Worksheet

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Hair Story (Ramos, 2021)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 2, Days 6 - 10)

Hair Story Beginning Sounds Worksheet (in the lesson plans)

Children's crayons (1)

Children's pencils

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plans)

Name: _____

Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the name of the picture to complete the sentence. After reading the page with children's responses. Children will decide if both names of the pictures begin with the same beginning sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same beginning sound, children will draw an "x" to indicate the pictures do not begin with the same beginning sound.

Hair Story

By: NoNieqa and Illustrated by: Keisha Morris

1. 's crown, lush, wild, beautiful brown: Puerto Rican princesa perfect lips, . Perfect skin. Perfect nose. Her eyes, just like Abuelo's.

2. Rudine. Behold Black royalty! Hair a wreath of majesty. bestow blessings. Sing in harmony. Hallelujahs soar for the one they adore.

3. Ringlets, first steps. Red cap, ride Papi's back. Sloppy fun. Tresses, kicks, and party dresses.

4. Strong hands. Stubborn knots. , tender. Iron, hot. Straighten. Get used to waitin'. Spritz and . Tug-of-brush. Is it done yet? Girl, don't rush.

5. Espejo, , ¿qué ves aquí? A fly Taíno queen. Generations of courage reflected in their eyes, foreva multiplied.

6. Fro-ments in time, and .

7. in the , hair ridin' the breeze.

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 2, Day 8, slides 67 - 109) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #67

- Say, **"Last time, we listened to a story about two girls and what their hair meant to them. Today, we'll listen to our story, we'll play iSpy and you'll look for things that begin with the sound I give you."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #68

- Listen to *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) in Black Language in the Slides.
- **SLIDE #69:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /s/ or /r/."** (scarf or wrap)
- **SLIDE #70:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /m/."** (moon)
- **SLIDE #71:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /sh/."** (shoes)
- **SLIDE #72:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /b/."** (boat or brush)
- **SLIDE #73:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /k/."** (comb)
- **SLIDE #74:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /b/."** (braids, bobos, balls)
- **SLIDE #75:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /d/."** (doll)
- **SLIDE #76:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /m/ in English or /ĕ/ in**

Spanish." (mirror or espejo)

- **SLIDE #77:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /s/."** (sink)
- **SLIDE #78**: Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /d/ in English or /b/ in**

  French." (dancer or ballerina)
- **SLIDE #79:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /l/."** (light)
- **SLIDE #80:** Say,**"I spy with my little eye someone with a name that begins with /f/."** (Frida Khalo, Frederick Douglas) If children do not know their names, tell them.
- **SLIDE #81:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /g/."** (girls or grass)
- **SLIDE #82:** Say, **"I spy with my little eye something that begins with /s/."** (sky)

SLIDE #83

- Say, **"Next, we'll listen to some tongue ticklers. Remember, tongue ticklers are sentences with lots of words that begin with the same beginning sound and our tongue ticklers will use some of the words from our story. We'll listen to the tongue tickler first and repeat it. Then, we'll try to say the tongue tickler together. After, I want us to figure out what sound most of the words begin with in the sentence."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #84

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **The beautiful brown baby's belleza beamed.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/b/)

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #85

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **Strong spritz slick straight stubborn strands.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/s/)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #86

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat.
- **Describe, decipher, decode the hairdo's we will do.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/d/)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #87

- Play the slide.
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- **Graceful gifted girls gossip in the grass.**
- Say, **"What sound do you hear at the beginning of most of the words?"** (/g/)
- Say, **"Next time, we'll work together to make phrases with two words that begin with the same beginning sound. Today, we'll do one more thing with our story."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #88

- Complete the *Hair Story* Beginning Sounds Worksheet.

- Say, **"As we listen to some of the story, we'll decide if both pictures' names begin with the same beginning sound or different beginning sounds. We'll go over the pictures first."**

SLIDES #89-100

- Review the pictures' names from the story to provide children additional support before beginning the worksheet using the slides.
- If children need support, read the clues on the slides to help children name the pictures correctly.

SLIDE #101

- Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the picture's name to complete the sentence. Afterwards, children will decide if both pictures' names begin with the same sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same sound, children will draw an "x" on both pictures to indicate they do not.
- Tell children to take out one crayon and a pencil.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #102

- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Baby begins with what sound?"** /b/
- Play, **"Belleza begins with what sound?"** /b/
- Say, "Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?" (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)

SLIDE #103

- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Baby begins with what sound?"** /b/
- Say, **"Grandmas begin with what sound?"** /g/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (different sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (no)
- Say, **"We'll draw X over them."**

SLIDE #104

- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Bun begins with what sound?"** /b/
- Say, **"Basketball begins with what sound?"** /b/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)

SLIDE #105

- Play the slide.
- Say, **"Scalp begins with what sound?"** /s/
- Say, **"Spray begins with what sound?"** /s/
- Say, **"Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?"** (same sounds)
- Say, **"Do we color them?"** (yes)

SLIDE #106

- Play the slide.
- Play, **"Espejo begins with what sound?"** /ĕ/

- Say, **“Beauty begins with what sound?”** /b/
- Say, **“Do the words begin with the same or different sounds?”** (different sounds)
- Say, **“Do we color them?”** (no)
- Say, **“We’ll put an x on them.”**

SLIDE #107

- Play the slide.
- Say, **“Frederick begins with what sound?”** /f/
- Say, **“Frida begins with what sound?”** /f/
- Say, **“Do the names begin with the same sound or different sounds?”** (same sounds)
- Say, **“Do we color them?”** (yes)

SLIDE #108

- Play the page.
- Say, **“Girls begin with what sound?”** /g/
- Say, **“Grass begin with what sound?”** /g/
- Say, **“Do the words begin with the same sound or different sounds?”** (same sounds)
- Say, **“Do we color them?”** (yes)

SLIDE #109

- Say, **“We’ll listen to our song that includes some of the hairstyles. Remember, we want to listen carefully because some parts in the song will ask us to think about the beginning sound in some of the words.”**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair n the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children’s engagement with recognizing beginning sounds.

- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Week 2| Day 9: *Hair Story* Read-Aloud with Alliterative Words & Kids Tongue Ticklers

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Hair Story (Ramos, 2021)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 2, Days 6 - 10)

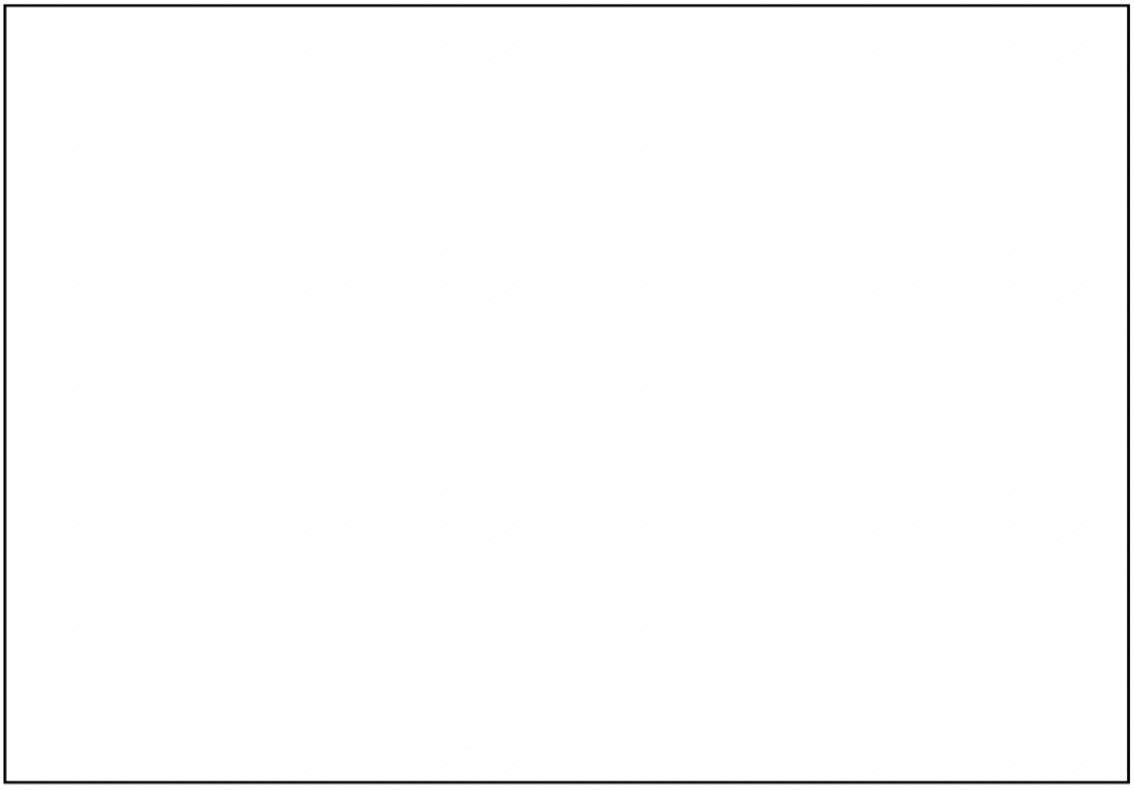
Children's handwriting paper (in the lesson plan)

Children's pencils

Children's crayons

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)



Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 2, Day 9, slides 110 - 142) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #110

- Say, **"Today, we'll listen to Hair Story. Afterwards, we'll create some phrases with two words that begin with the same sounds from our book. Then we'll work together to create our own tongue tickler phrases for us to continue practicing identifying beginning sounds."**

SLIDES #111-125

- Listen to the book *Hair Story* (Ramos, 2021) in the slides.

SLIDE #125

- Listen to the slide.
- Say, **"Now, we'll create some phrases with words that begin with the same sound from our story."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #126

- Say, **"Frederick Douglass has a what?"** (*fro*)
- Say, **"Fro begins with what sound?"** (*/f/*)
- Say, **"Let's think of some words that begin with /f/ to name his fro. He has a big fro with a lot of hair and it's loose. What's a word that begins with /f/ that could mean this? What are some other words that begin with /f/?"**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk.

- Say, **“Who can share a word with us to name how his fro looks that begins with /f/?”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #127

- Say, **“So one could say full fro. Your turn.”**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #128

- Say, **“One could say fresh fro. Your turn.”**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #129

- Say, **“One could say free fro. Your turn.”**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #130

- Say, **“One might challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence and say, Frederick’s fresh fro is full and free. Your turn.”**
- Provide children to repeat after you.
- Say, **“Most of the words I used begin with what sound?”** (*/f/*)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #131

- Say, **“Frida Kahlo’s headband has what?”** (*flowers*)
- Say, **“Flowers begin with what sound?”** (*/f/*)

- Say, **"*L*et's think of some words that begin with /f/ to say something about the flowers. What are some words we could use to describe the flowers or flores?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- Say, **"Who can share a word with us to name something about the flowers that begin with /f/?"**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #132

- Say, **"So one could say fresh flowers. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #133

- Say, **"One could say fab flowers. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #134

- Say, **"One could say fancy flowers. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #135

- Say, **"One might challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence and say, Frida's fresh flores frame her face. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Say, **"Most of the words I used begin with what sound?"** (/f)

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #136

- Say, **"We'll go over one more together before you try to create one with your classmates. This is a what?"** (*basketball*)
- Say, **"Basketball begins with what sound?"** (*/b/*)
- Say, **"Let's think of some words that begin with /b/ to name the basketball's look, size and feel. What are some words that begin with /b/?"**
- Say, **"Who can share a word with us to name how the basketball looks or feels?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #137

- Say, **"So one could say big basketball. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #138

- Say, **"One could say bumpy basketball. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #139

- Say, **"One could say brown basketball. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #140

- Say, **"One can challenge themselves to make a tongue tickler sentence and say, Brandon bounce the big, bumpy basketball. Your turn."**
- Provide children time to repeat after you.
- *Say,* **"Most of the words I used begin with what sound?"** (*/f/*)

SLIDE #141

- Say, **"Now, you'll work in groups with your classmates to create a tongue tickler phrase. First, you'll pick a word from our story on the next slide. Next, you'll think of a word that begins with the same sound as the word to name something about it. Everyone in your group will write the two words that begin with the same sound, or you can try to write the complete sentence. Everyone will draw a picture to match."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #142

- Say, **"Here are some pictures of words from Hair Story. Decide which thing you want to focus on as a group. We'll go over them first."**
- Provide children paper.
- Visit children's groups and provide support when necessary.
- While children are working, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair twice.
- Once children are finished, provide children time to share their tongue tickler phrases with the class.

Week 2| Day 10: Beginning Phoneme Dominoes Matching Game

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut & Hair Story

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 2, Days 6 - 10)

Dominoes worksheets (pages 1 and 2 for each pair of children; in the lesson plan)

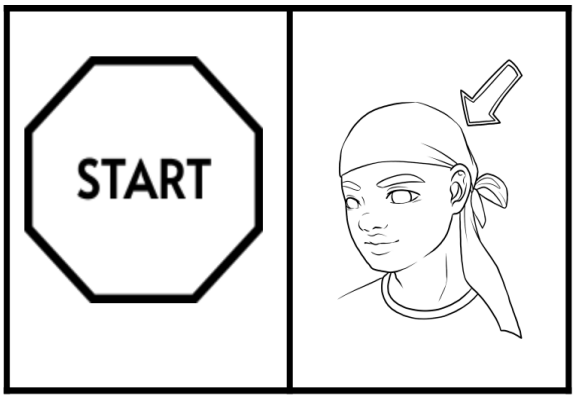
Children's scissors

Children's pencils

Sandwich bags for each pair of children's dominoes

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)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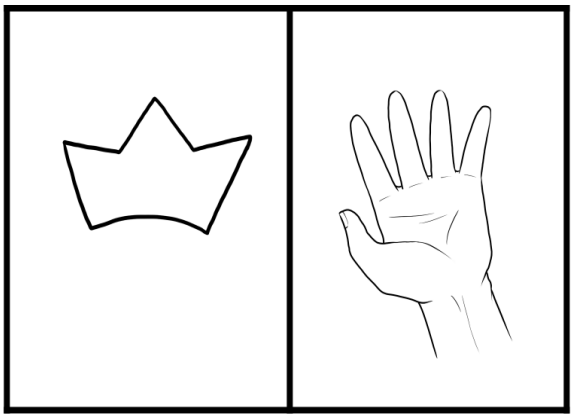

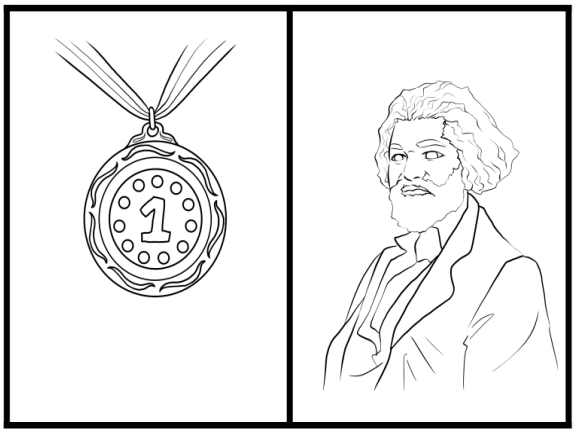
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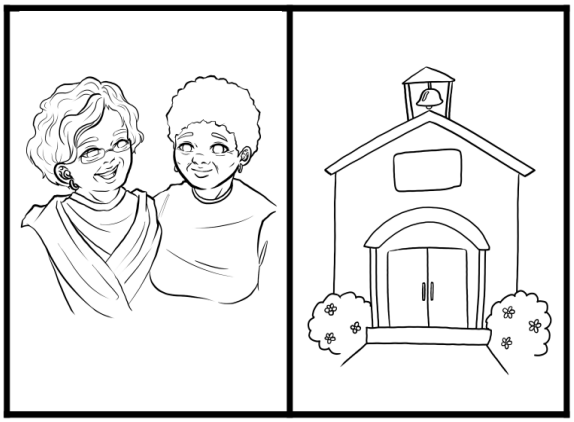

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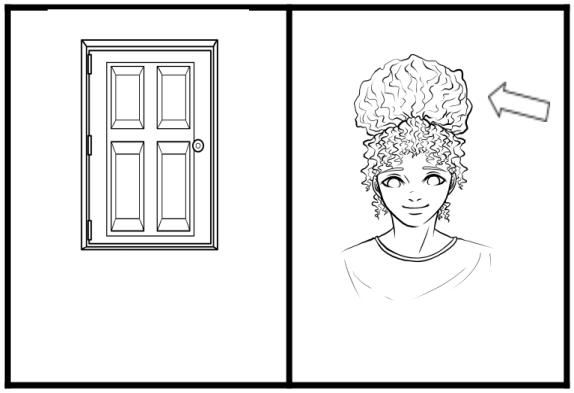


Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 2, Day 10, slides 143 - 165) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #143

- Say, **"Today we'll play a game. First, we'll review picture names in the two books, Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut and Hair Story."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDES #144-152

- Go over the names of the pictures children will use to play beginning phoneme dominoes.

SLIDE #153

- Say, **"Next, we'll play dominoes in pairs using the pictures we went over."**
- Pass out dominoes worksheets to each pair of children.
- One child should have the first page, and the other child should have the second page.
- Say, **"Peanut butters will cut the four dominoes from the first page. Jellies will cut the five dominoes from the second page. Watch me first. I'm going to cut around the big black rectangular bold lines to cut out the dominoes from my sheet. Each domino will have two pictures. Then my partner is going to cut the dominoes out from their sheet. Altogether, each pair will have 9 dominoes."**
- Put children in peanut butter and jelly partners.
- Pass out worksheets and scissors to children.
- Make sure each pair of children has one of each page.
- Provide children time to cut out the dominoes.

SLIDE #154

- Say, **"Now, you'll turn all of the dominoes facing up so that you can see all the pictures**. **We have to match the beginning sound of the pictures' names, starting with the start sign. I'm peanut butter so I'll go first. You'll take turns to match all of the dominoes until you get to the stop sign. When it's your turn, you'll say the picture's name and then the beginning sound of the word. For example, what's the name of the picture next to the start sign?** (do-rag) **Do-rag begins with what sound?** (/d/) **Now, Jelly or my partner will look at the dominoes and look for a domino with a picture that begins with /d/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #155

- Say, **"If we look at the dominoes, which domino has a picture that begins with /d/ as the first picture?"** (door)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #156

- Say, **"Yes, door begins with /d/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #157

- Say, **"So Jelly will connect do-rag and door. They can do this in three ways. They can put the door next to the do-rag."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #158

- Say, **"They can turn the door and place it above the do-rag."**

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #159

- Say, **"Or they can turn the door and place it under the do-rag. Next to the door is a picture of a what?** (bun) **Bun begins with what sound?** (/b/) **Now it's my turn to find the next domino with the same beginning sound, /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #160

- Say, **"If we look at the dominoes, which domino has a picture that begins with /b/ as the first picture?"** (barber)
- Provide children time to respond. Name the pictures to provide children more support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #161

- Say, **"Yes, barber begins with /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #162

- Say, "**Since I'm Peanut Butter, I'll connect the matching dominoes. I can connect the domino in three ways. I can put it next to the picture with the same beginning sound."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #163

- Say, "**I can connect the domino above the picture with the same beginning sound."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #164

- Say, "**Or I can connect the domino below the picture with the same beginning sound. Then we'll keep taking turns to match the dominoes. Next to the barber is a picture of what?"**
- Provide children time to answer.
- Say, **"Mirror begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- You may consider providing children additional support by connecting a few more dominoes by the beginning sound as a class.
- Show the next slide

SLIDE #165

- Say, **"Then the two of you will keep going until you match all of the dominoes."**
    - **Domino 1:** start sign | do-rag
    - **Domino 2:** door | bun
    - **Domino 3:** barber | mirror
    - **Domino 4:** medal | Frederick Douglass
    - **Domino 5:** Frida Khlao | girls
    - **Domino 6:** grandmas | school
    - **Domino 7:** spray | cornrows
    - **Domino 8:** crown | hand
    - **Domino 9:** hair | stop sign
- Provide children time to connect their dominoes.
- Provide children support with the names of the images when necessary.
- Share with children that if they did not connect all of their dominoes that they will have

time to play again the following school day.

- While children are working, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair twice.
- Once children are finished, provide children time to put their dominoes in the bags.
- Save children's dominoes for week three of instruction.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 3 | Days 11 - 15 | Beginning Sounds

Week 3| Day 11: More Beginning Phoneme Dominoes Matching Game

(illustrations from *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* & *Hair Story*)

Week 3| Day 12: *Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Read-Alouds & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Week 3| Day 13: Create *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Class Book

Week 3| Day 14: *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Class Book Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Week 3| Day 15: More *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Book Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Week 3| Day 11: More Beginning Phoneme Dominoes Matching Game

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut & Hair Story

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Material(s)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

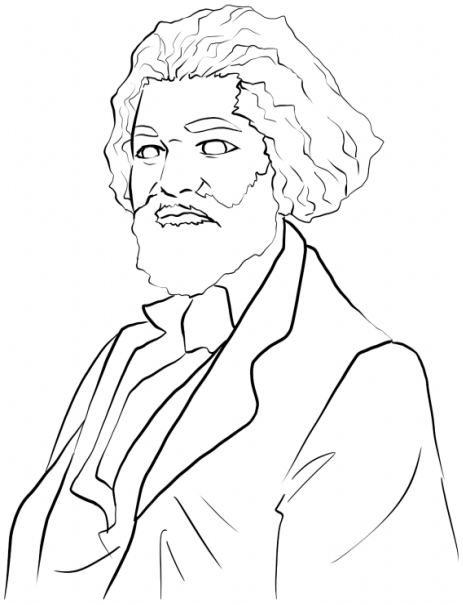
Children's dominoes

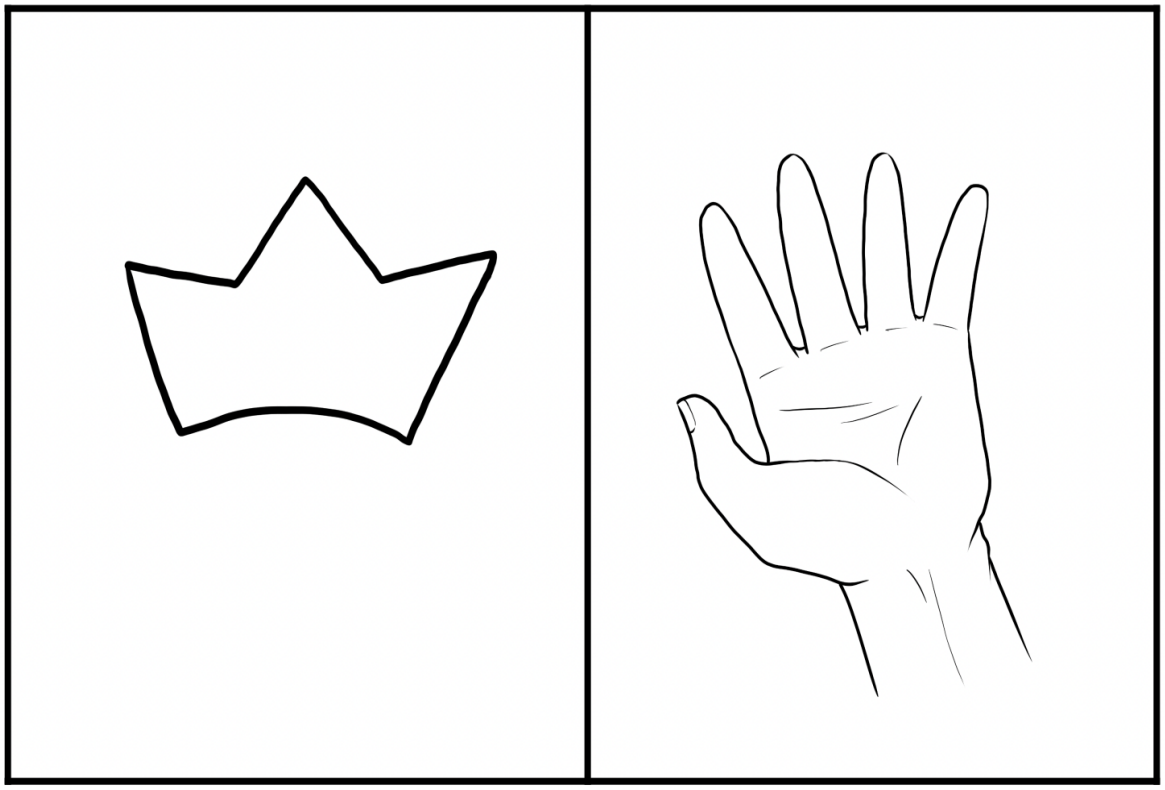
Teacher's dominoes (in the lesson plan)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

START





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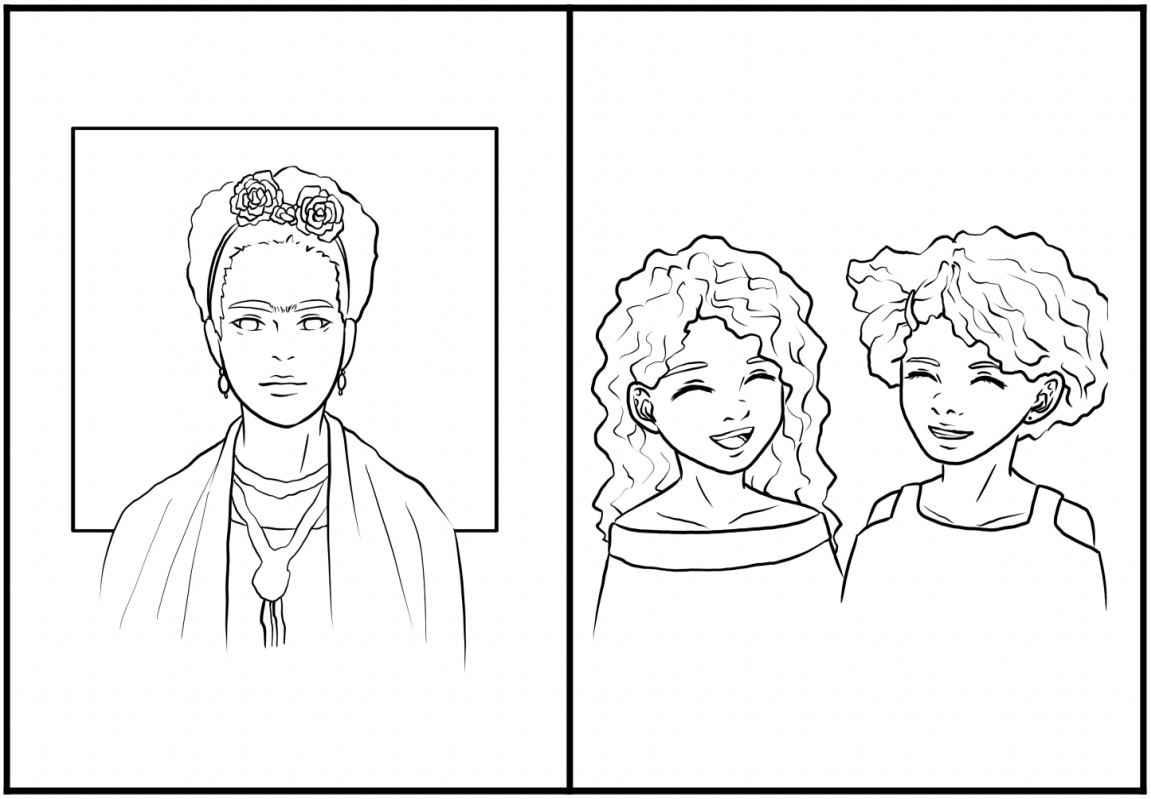
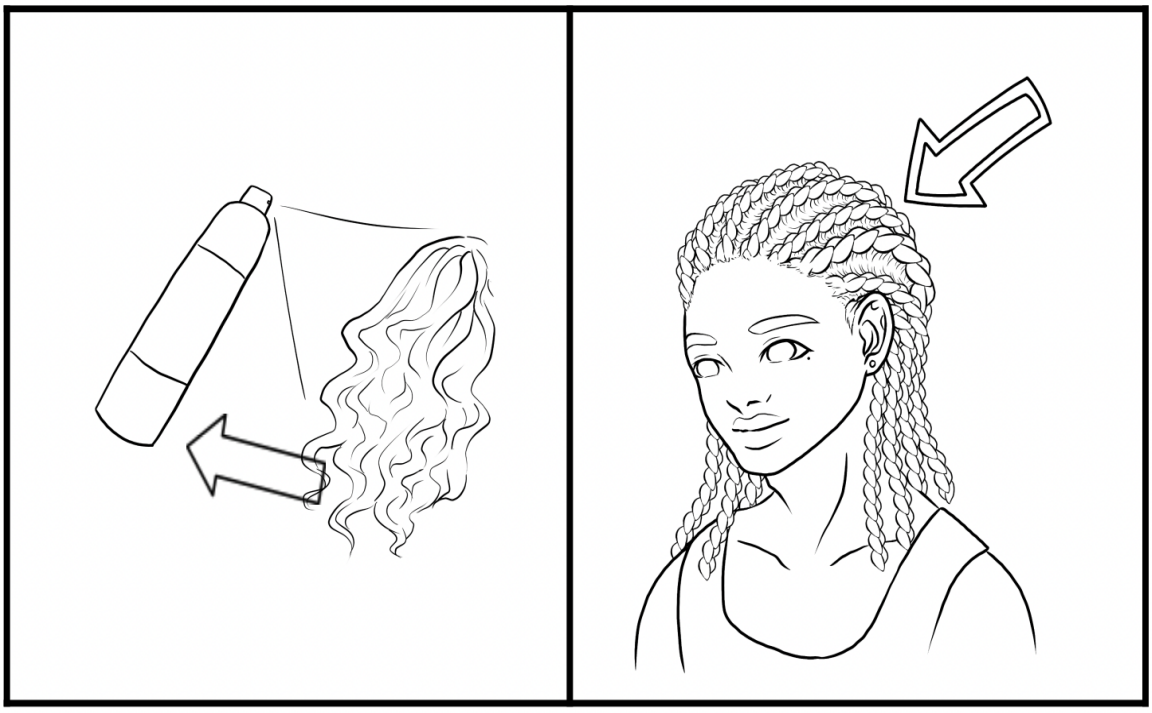




Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Day 11, slides 2 - 23) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #2

- Say, **"We'll play dominoes as a class first. Then, we'll play beginning sounds dominoes again in pairs. This time, Jellies will start, and you'll keep taking turns."**
- Decide if children would benefit from modeling how to play again.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDES #3-11

- Go over the names of the pictures children will use to play beginning sounds dominoes.
- Pass out children's dominoes.

SLIDE #12

- Say, **"Now, you'll turn all of the dominoes facing up so that you can see all the pictures**. **Remember, we have to match the beginning sound of the pictures' names, starting with the start sign. You'll take turns to match all of the dominoes until you get to the stop sign. When it's your turn, you'll say the picture's name and then the beginning sound of the word. Jellies go first. For example, what's the name of the picture next to the start sign?** (do-rag) **Do-rag begins with what sound?** (/d/) **Now, Peanut Butter will look at the dominoes and look for a domino with a picture that begins with /d/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #13

- Say, **"If we look at the dominoes, which domino has a picture that begins with /d/ as the first picture?"** (door)
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #14

- Say, **"Yes, door begins with /d/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #15

- Say, **"So Peanut Butter will connect do-rag and door. They can do this in three ways. They can put the door next to the do-rag."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #16

- Say, **"They can turn the door and place it above the do-rag."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #17

- Say, **"Or they can turn the door and place it under the do-rag. Next to the door is a picture of a what?** (bun) **Bun begins with what sound?** (/b/) **Now it's Jellies turn to find the next domino with the same beginning sound, /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #18

- Say, **"If we look at the dominoes, which domino has a picture that begins with /b/ as the first picture?"** (barber)
- Provide children time to respond. Name the pictures to provide children more support.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #19

- Say, **"Yes, barber begins with /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #20

- Say, "**Jelly will connect the matching dominoes. They can connect the domino in three ways. They can put it next to the picture with the same beginning sound."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #21

- Say, "**They can connect the domino above the picture with the same beginning sound."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #22

- Say, "**Or they can connect the domino below the picture with the same beginning sound. Then we'll keep taking turns to match the dominoes. Next to the barber is a picture of what?"**
- Provide children time to answer.
- Say, **"Mirror begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond.
- You may consider providing children additional support by connecting a few more dominoes by the beginning sound as a class.
- Show the next slide

SLIDE #23

- Say, **"Then the two of you will keep going until you match all of the dominoes."**
    - **Domino 1:** start sign | do-rag
    - **Domino 2:** door | bun
    - **Domino 3:** barber | mirror
    - **Domino 4:** medal | Frederick Douglass
    - **Domino 5:** Frida Khlao | girls
    - **Domino 6:** grandmas | school
    - **Domino 7:** spray | cornrows
    - **Domino 8:** crown | hand
    - **Domino 9:** hair | stop sign
- Provide children time to connect their dominoes.
- Provide children support with the names of the images when necessary.
- Share with children that if they did not connect all of their dominoes that they will have time to play again the following school day.
- While children are working, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair twice.
- Once children are finished, provide children time to put their dominoes in the bags.
- Save children's dominoes for week three of instruction.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 3| Day 12: *Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Read-Alouds & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Cool Cuts (Roe, 2016)

Happy Hair (Roe, 2014)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Day 11, slides 24 - 78) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #24

- Say, **"Today, we'll listen to Cool Cuts and Happy Hair. We'll listen to Cool Cuts first. In the title, Cool Cuts, what's the first sound in both words?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/).*
- Say*,* **"Yes, cool and cuts begin with /k/. C spells /k/ in cool and cut."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDES #25-37

- Listen to the book, *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2016), in the slides.

SLIDE #38

- Say, **"Now, we'll listen to our story again and I want us to pay close attention to the beginning sounds we hear in the words. Then we'll decide if the word that describes and names the hairstyle begins with the same sound. If both words begin with the same sound, we'll put our hands on our heads. If the words do not begin with the same sound, we'll put our hands on our shoulders."**
- Show the next slide.
- Listen to *Cool Cuts* (Roe, 2016) in the Slides a second time, emphasizing specific words to support children in recognizing beginning sounds.

SLIDE #39

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"High-top is a compound word, or two small words put together to make a new word with a new meaning. If we break the word into parts, we would have high and top. Do high and top begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"High begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/h/).*
- Say, **"Top begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/t/)*.
- Say, **"Right, high and top do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #40

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Cool curls, do cool and curls begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Cool and curls begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, cool and curls begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #41

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Lively locs, do lively and locs begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Lively and locs begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/l/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, lively and locs begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #42

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"'Fro-hawk is a compound word or two small words put together. If we break the word into parts, we would have 'fro and hawk. Do fro and hawk begin with the same sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Fro begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/f/).*
- Say, **"Hawk begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/h/)*.
- Say, **"Right, 'fro and hawk do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #43

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Mini-twists is a compound word. If we break the word into parts, we would have mini and twists. Do mini and twists begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Mini begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/m/).*
- Say, **"Twists begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/t/)*.
- Say, **"Right, mini and twists do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #44

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Low waves, do low and waves begin with the same sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Low begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/l/).*
- Say, **"Waves begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/w/)*.
- Say, **"Right, low and waves do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #45

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Crisp cornrows, do crisp and cornrows begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say ,**"Crisp and cornrows begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, crisp and cornrows begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #46

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Perfect part, do perfect and part begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Perfect and part begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/p/)*.

- Say, **"Yes, perfect and part begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #47

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Carefree is a compound word. If we break the word into parts, we would have care and free. Do care and free begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Care begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/).*
- Say, **"Free begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/f/)*.
- Say, **"Right, care and free do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #48

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Step-up, is a compound word. If we break the word into parts, we would have step and up. Do step and up begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Step begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/s/).*
- Say, **"Up begins with what sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond *(/ŭ/)*.
- Say, **"Right, step and up do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #49

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Full 'fro, do full and fro begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Full and 'fro begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/f/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, full and fro begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #50

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Dope design, do dope and design begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Dope and design begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/d/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, dope and design begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #51

- Say, **"Next, we'll listen to Happy Hair. In the title, Happy Hair, what sound do we hear at the beginning of both words?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/h/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, happy and hair begin with /h/."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDES #52-64

- Listen to *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2014) in the Slides.

SLIDE #65

- Say, **"Now, we'll listen to our story again. This time, you'll stand up if the two words naming the hairstyle begin with the same sound and you'll squat down if the two words do not begin with the same sound."**
- You may consider allowing children to decide what movements they would like to use.
- Listen to *Happy Hair* (Roe, 2014) in the Slides a second time, focusing on specific words to support children in recognizing alliterative phrases.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #66

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Fab 'fro, do fab and 'fro begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes)*.
- Say, **"Fab and fro begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/f/)*.

- Say, **"Yes, fab and fro begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #67

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Cool curls, do cool and curls begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Cool and curls begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, cool and curls begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #68

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Cute crop, do cute and crop begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **"Cute and crop begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/k/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, cute and crop begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #69

- Listen to the page.

- Say, **“Primped press, do primped and press begin with the same sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **“Primped and press begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/p/)*.
- Say, **“Yes, primed and press begin with the same sound.”**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #70

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **“Blowout is a compound word. If we break the word into parts, we would have blow and out. Do blow and out begin with the same sound?”**
- Provide children to respond *(no).*
- Say, **“Blow begins with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/b/).*
- Say, **“Out begins with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/ou/)*.
- Say, **“Right, blow and out do not begin with the same sound.”**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #71

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **“Bangin’ bantu (u spells /oo/ as in moon), do bagin’ and bantu begin with the same sound?”**

- Provide children time to respond *(yes)*.
- Say, **"Bangin' and bantu begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/b/)*.
- Say, **"Yes, bangin' and bantu begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #72

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"'Fro-hawk, is a compound word. If we break the word into parts, we would have fro and hawk. Do fro and hawk begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no)*.
- Say, **"Fro begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/f/)*.
- Say, **"Hawk begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/h/)*.
- Say, **"Right, fro and hawk do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #73

- Listen to the page.
- Say, **"Pattern wrap, do pattern and wrap begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no)*.
- Say, **"Pattern begins with what sound?"**

- Provide children time to respond *(/p/).*
- Say, **"Wrap begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/r/)*.
- Say, **"Right, pattern and wrap do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #74

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"'Wash-'n'-go is a combination of three small words put together to mean a particular hair style. Two of those words, wash go, do they begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(no).*
- Say, **"Wash begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/w/).*
- Say, **"Go begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/g/)*.
- Say, **"Right, wash and go do not begin with the same sound."**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #75

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **"Pom-pom puffs, do pom-pom, and puffs begin with the same sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*

- Say, **“Pom-pom, and puffs begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/p/)*.
- Say, **“Yes, pom-pom and puffs begin with the same sound.”**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #76

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **“Bomb braids, do bomb and braids begin with the same sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **“Bomb and braids begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/b/)*.
- Say, **“Yes, bomb and braids begin with the same sound.”**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #77

- Listen to the pages.
- Say, **“Lovely locs, do lovely and locs begin with the same sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(yes).*
- Say, **“Lovely and locs begin with what sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/l/)*.
- Say, **“Yes, lovely and locs begin with the same sound.”**
- Repeat the words if children need additional support.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #78

- Say, **"We'll listen to Cool Cuts Happy Hair and sing along to help us recognize the beginning sound in words."**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair in the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children's engagement with recognizing beginning sounds.
- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Week 3| Day 13: Create *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Class Book

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Cool Cuts (Roe, 2016)

Happy Hair (Roe, 2014)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

Cool Cuts and Happy Hair templates (in the lesson plans)

One crown (printed on yellow paper) per child

Multiple copies of each self-portrait template (one per child)

Crayola's Color of the World Markers

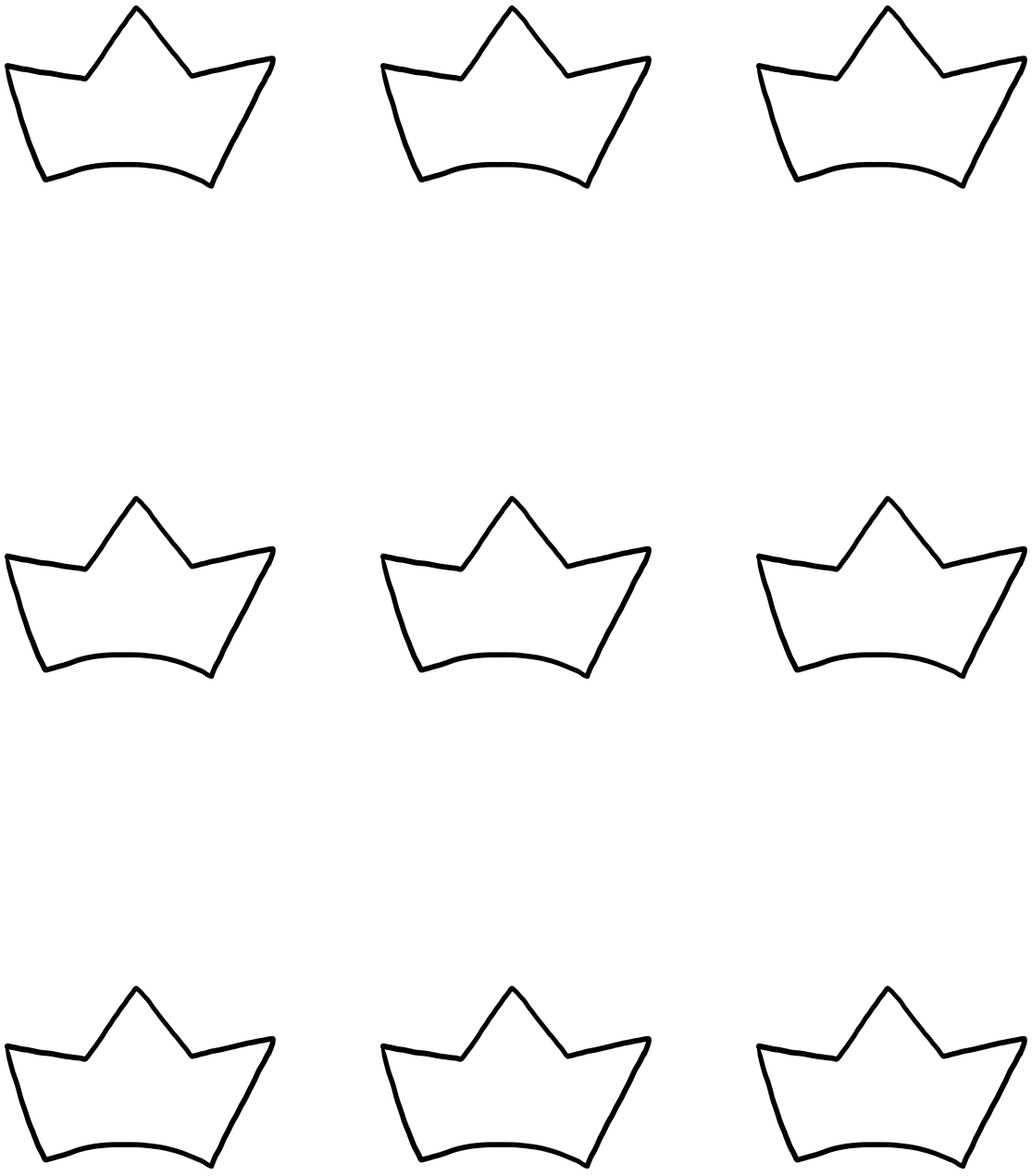
Crayola's Color of the World Crayons

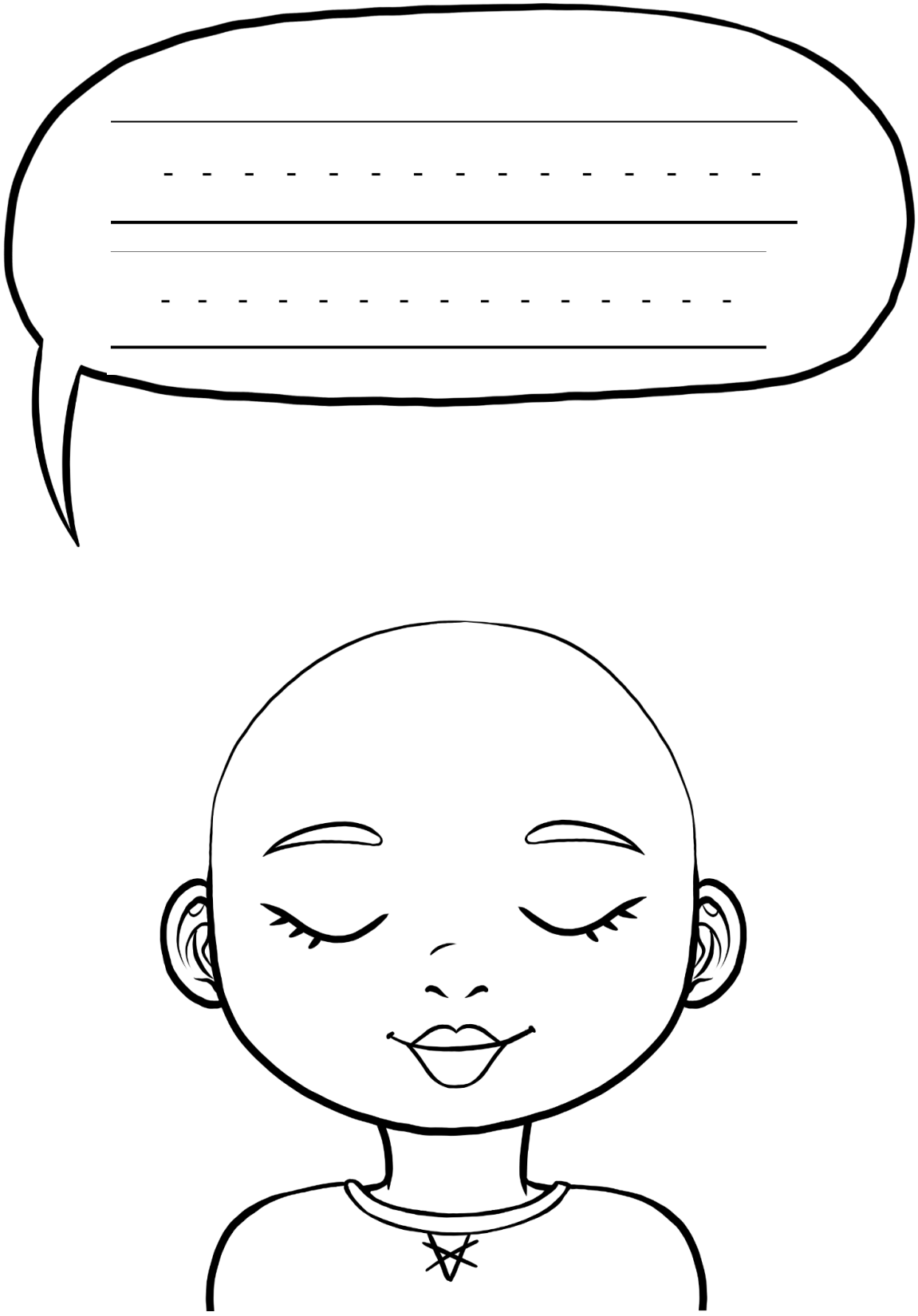
Children's crayons

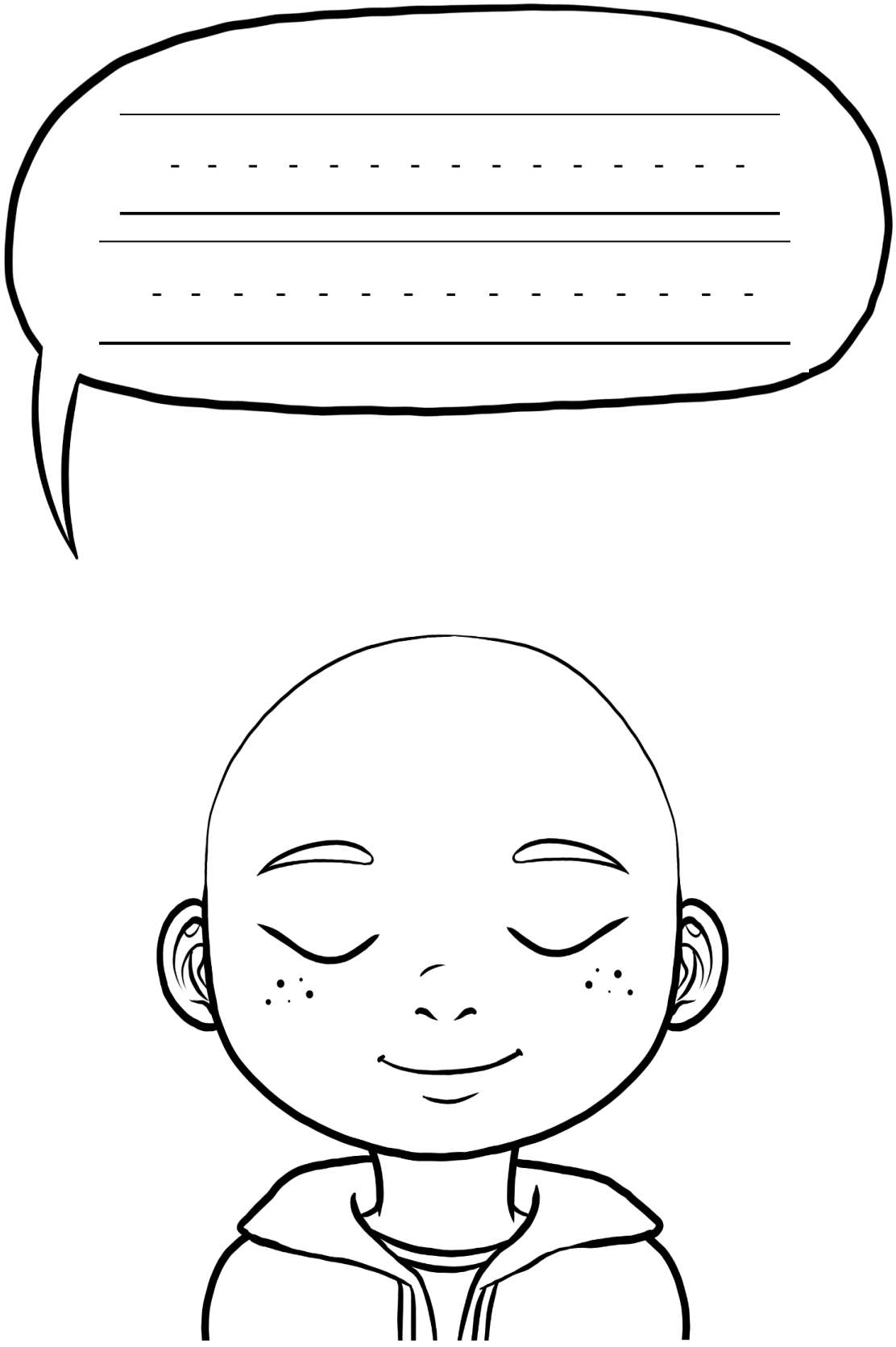
Children's markers

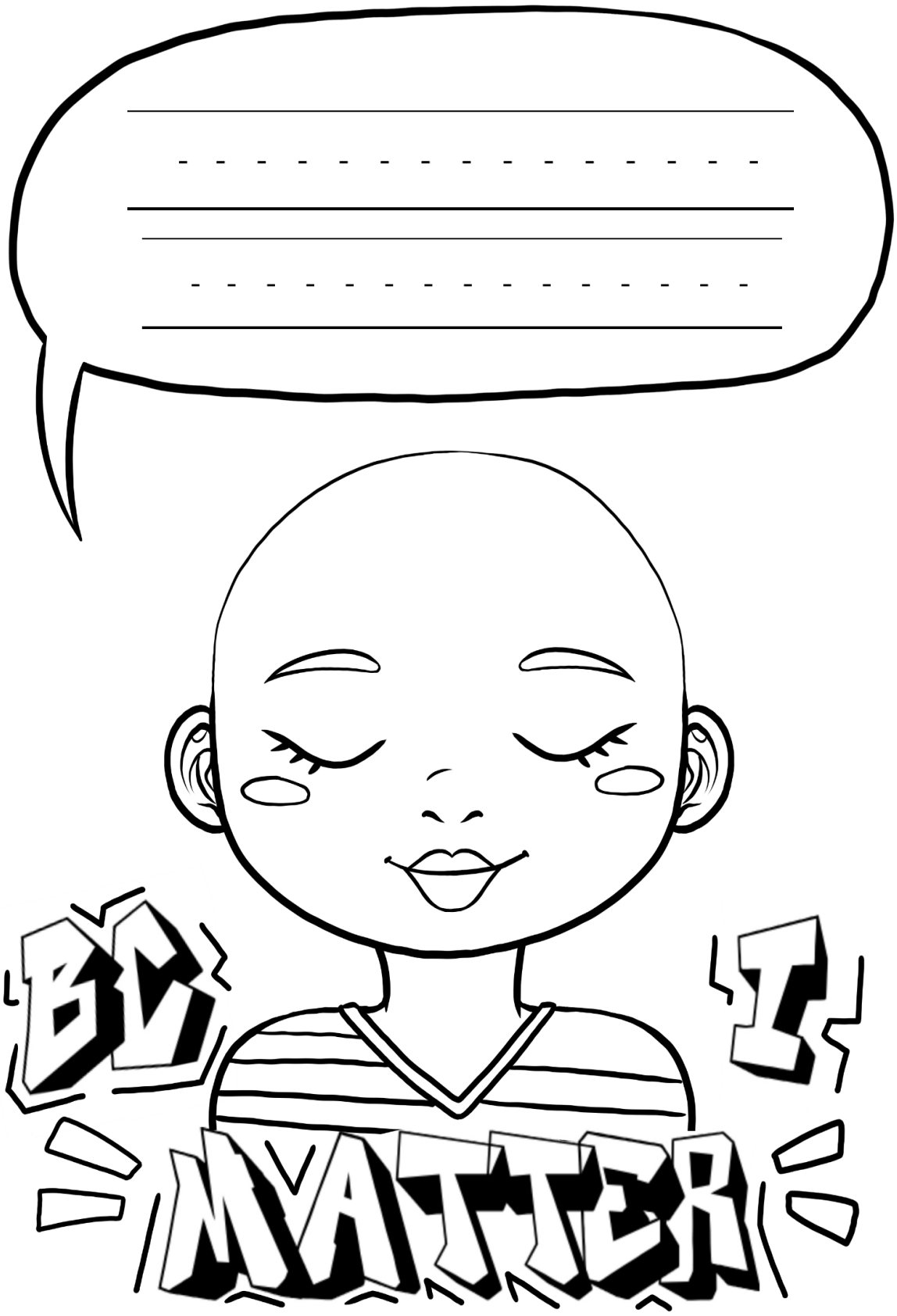
Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)





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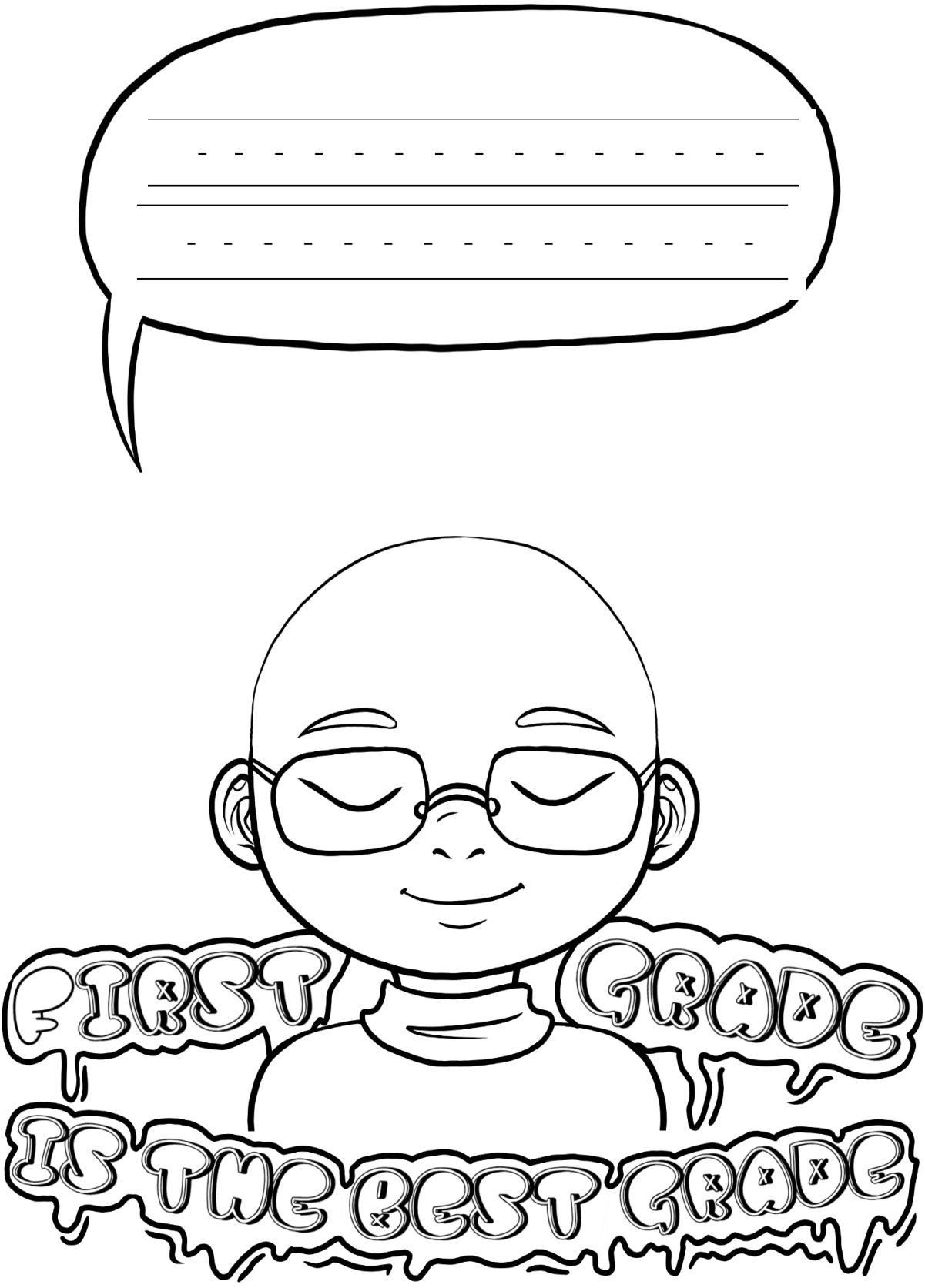
FIRST GRADE
IS THE BEST GRADE

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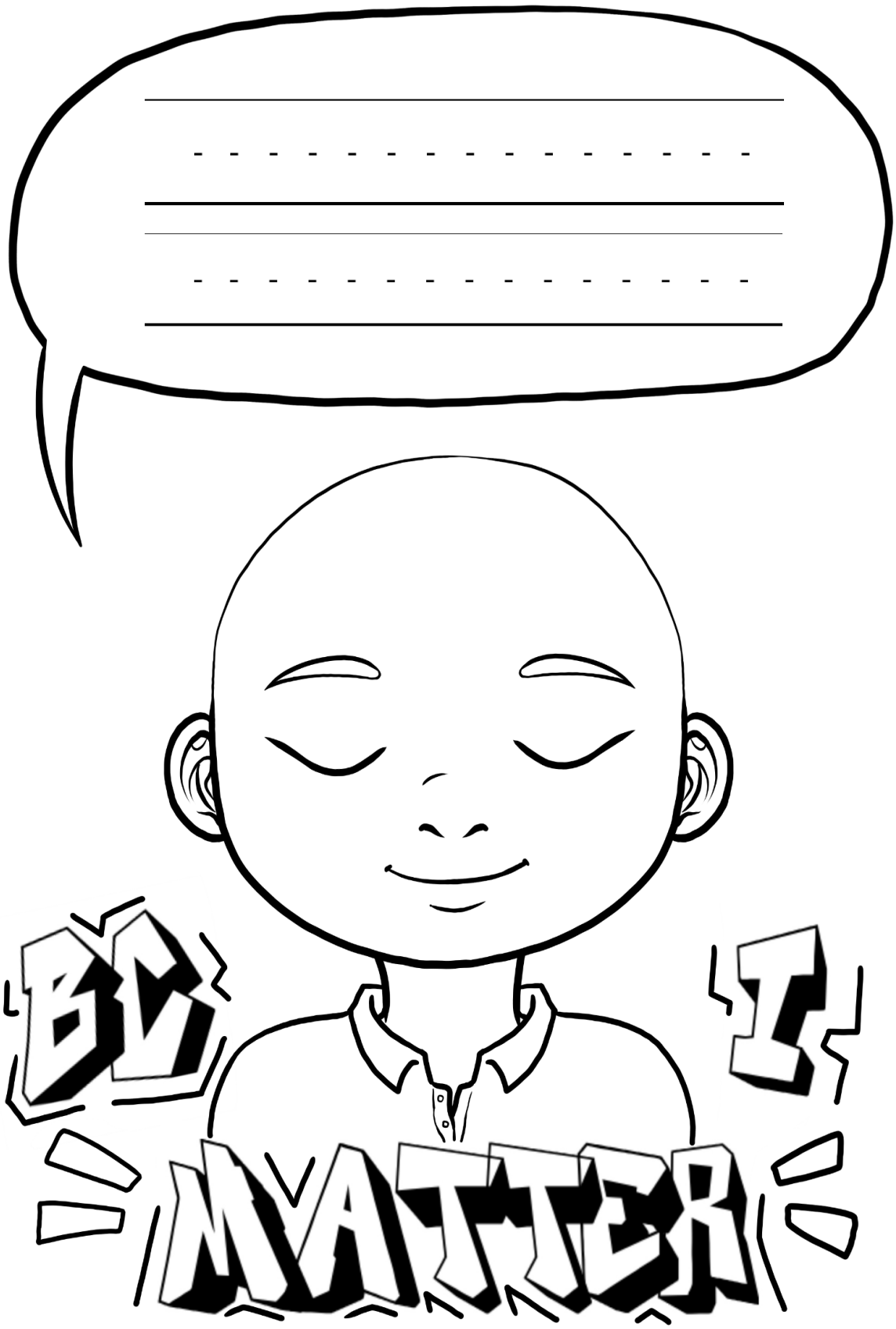
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Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Days 11, slide 79 - 110) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #79

- Say, **"Today, we'll make self-portraits of our favorite hairstyles like the kids in our books, Cool Cuts and Happy Hair. Then we'll use two words with the same beginning sound to describe and name our hairstyle. We can use any language to name our hairstyle, so we can use two words we might use at home when we're talking to our families and friends or in school. After we make our portraits, we'll make a class book of our cool cuts and happy hair to read like we did the other books."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #80

- Say, **"Let's say my favorite hairstyle is two buns. Buns begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/b/)*.
- Say, **"Now I want to think of a word to describe my buns that begin with /b/. I might think about the size of the buns, the color of the buns, or a way to say nice or pretty in another language that begins with /b/. Talk to someone sitting around you. Remember it can be a word in any language you use at home or at school."**
- Provide children time to talk to a classmate sitting near them.
- Say, **"What are some words that begin with /b/ that I might use?"**
- Allow children to share their word with the class.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #81

- Say, **"One word I can use is bad which means good or cool in Black Language to describe the buns. What's the first sound we hear in /băd/?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/b/*).
- Say, **"What letter spells /b/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(b).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #82

- Say, **"Yes, b spells /b/. Then I'm going to spell the rest of the sounds I hear in the word. What's the next sound in bad? I hear /b-ăăăă-d/. What's the next sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/ă/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /ă/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(a).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #83

- Say, **"Yes, a spells /ă/. What's the next sound in bad? I hear /b/ /ă/ /d/. What's the last sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/d/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /d/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(d).*

- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #84

- Say, **"Yes, d spells /d/. Then I'm going to make a finger space in between bad and my next word. Buns begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/b/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /b/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(b).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #85

- Say, **"Yes, buns begin with /b/. What letter spells /b/? Then I'm going to spell the rest of the sounds I hear in the word. What's the next sound in buns? I hear /b-ŭŭŭŭŭnz/. What's the next sound?"**
- **Provide children time to respond** *(/ŭ/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /ŭ/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(u).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #86

- Say, **"Yes, u spells /ŭ/. What's the next sound in buns? I hear /b-ŭ-nnnnnz/. What's the next sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/n/).*

- Say, **“What letter spells /n/?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(n)*.
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #87

- Say, **“Yes, n spells /n/. What's the next sound in buns? I hear /b/ /ŭ/ /n/ /zzzzz/. What’s the last sound?”**
- Provide children time to respond *(/z/)*.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #88

- Say, **“Z is one way we spell /z/ and sometimes, we use s to spell /z/. In buns, s spells /z/.”**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #89

- Say, **“What are some other words that begin with /b/ that I might use? Remember it could be a word in any language we use at home or in school. Talk to someone sitting around you.”**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk.
- Allow three children to share their word with the class.
- Create a list on the board of children’s responses.
- Prompt children to provide some of the following words if children need additional support.
- Say, **“If I think about the size, I could have. . .”**

- Provide children time to respond (*big*).
- Say, **"If I think of the hair color, I could have. . ."**
- Provide children time to respond (*brown, black, blonde, blue*).
- Say, **"If I think of another word that means pretty, I might say. . ."**
- Provide children time to respond (*beautiful*).
- Say, **"Another way I could say pretty in Spanish is bonitos."**
- Provide children time to respond (*bonitos*).
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #90

- Use your pointer finger to model print referencing, particularly concept of words, by starting under the first letter of the word and scooping or dragging your pointer finger through all the letters in the word as you read the word.
- Say, **"So, I might think about the size and use big. Big begins with /b/, so big buns. I might think about the color of my buns and use brown. Brown begins with /b/ so brown buns. If my hair was a different color that begins with /b/, I might use black, blonde, or blue. Those words begin with /b/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #91

- Play the clip.
- Another way I could say pretty that begins with /b/ is bonitos, so buns bonitos. In Spanish, we name the hairstyle first.
- **Say, "If I think about the color, I might use brown, so brown buns. If my hair was a different color that begins with /b/, I might use black, blonde, or blue. Those words begin with /b/."**

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #92

- Say, **"Let's say my favorite hairstyle is the bowl cut or the mushroom cut. Since we already thought of a hairstyle that begins with /b/, we'll call this style the mushroom. Mushroom begins with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/m/).*
- Say, **"Now I want to think of a word to describe my mushroom that begin with /m/. Think about the look some people might give their mushroom or how their mushroom might make them feel like the boy in Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut. Talk to someone sitting around you. Remember you can use a word in any language you use at home or at school."**
- Provide children time to talk to a classmate sitting near them.
- Say, **"What are some words that begin with /m/ that I might use to describe mushroom?"**
- Allow children to share their word with the class.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #93

- Say, **"We'll use mad which means crazy cool in Black Language to describe the mushroom. What's the first sound we hear in /mmm//ă//d//?"**
- Provide children time to respond (*/m/*).
- Say, **"What letter spells /m/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(m).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #94

- Say, **"Yes, m spells /m/. Then I'm going to spell the rest of the sounds I hear in the word. What's the next sound in mad? I hear /m-ăăăăd/. What's the next sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/ă/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /ă/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(a).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #95

- Say*,* **"Yes, a spells /ă/. What's the next sound in mad? I hear /m-ă-d/. What's the last sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/d/).*
- Say, **"What letter spells /d/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(d).*
- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #96

- Say, **"Yes, d spells /d/. Then I'm going to start my next word on the next line since it's a long word. Mushroom begin with what sound?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(/m/).*
- Say*,* **"What letter spells /m/?"**
- Provide children time to respond *(m).*

- Repeat the word to provide children additional support if necessary.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #97

- Say, **"Yes, m spells /m/. Mushroom is a longer word, so I'll continue to spell each sound in the word. The next sound I hear is /ŭ/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #98

- Say, **"U spells /ŭ/. The next sound I hear in mushroom, is /sh/. Two letters spell /sh/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #99

- Say, **"Sh spell /sh/. The next sound I hear in mushroom, is /r/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #100

- Say, **"R spells /r/. The next sound I hear in mushroom, is /oo/ (as in moon)."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #101

- Say, **"Oo spell /oo/. The last sound I hear in mushroom, is /m/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #102

- Say, **"M spells /m/."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #103

- Say, **"What are some other words that begin with /m/ that I might use? Remember it can be a word in any language we use at home or at school. Talk to someone sitting around you."**
- Provide children time to Turn and Talk.
- Create a list on the board of children's responses.
- Prompt children to provide some of the following words if children need additional support.
- Say, **"If I wake up and I don't comb my hair, it might be. . ."**
- Provide children time to respond and the beginning sounds in the word for children to guess the complete word (*messy*).
- Say, **"What word did the boy use in our story when got his fresh cut that begins with /m/?"**
- Provide children time to respond and the beginning sounds in the word for children to guess the complete word (*magnificent*).
- Say, **"If my hairstyle makes me feel strong, I might say. . ."**
- Provide children time to respond and the beginning sounds in the word for children to guess the complete word (*mighty*).
- Say, **"What's another way I could say beautiful or delightful that begins with /m/?"**
- Provide children time to respond and the beginning sounds in the word for children to guess the complete word (*magical*).
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #104

- Say, **"So, I might use messy. Messy begins with /m/, so messy mushroom. I might use mighty. Mighty begins with /m/ so mighty mushroom."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #105

- Say, **"I might use magical. Magical begins with /m/, so magical mushroom. I might use magnificent. Magnificent begins with /m/ so magnificent mushroom."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #106

- Say, **"A few other hairstyles we might use are hip hijab as in cool, hot hijab as in a very nice-looking hijab, and happy hijab as in my hijab brings me joy."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #107

- Say, **"A few other hairstyles we might use are wet waves as in 'My waves are wet like water,' wild waves as in fun or cool waves, and wavy waves as in my hair has rows of ripples."**
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #108

- Say, **"Think of your favorite hairstyle. We'll take a second and you can share with someone sitting near you."**
- Provide children time to share their favorite hairstyles with classmates and then with the class.

- Say, **"Think of a word you can use to describe the hairstyle you picked. You might think about the color, size, shape, or something the hairstyle makes you think of. Remember this word can be in any language and both words must begin with the same beginning sound."**
- Allow children to share their favorite hairstyles with a classmate and then with the class.
- Say, "**You should have an idea of which hairstyle you are going to draw, and you might have a word that describes that hairstyle. If you don't, I will help you. Remember you can create a name for your favorite style, too. Choose one of the templates you want to use to draw your self-portrait. If your first choice is gone by the time you come up, think of a second choice. Did you notice anything about the letters? What style of art are they in?** (graffiti) **Let's read them."**
- Make multiple copies of each template.
- Call children randomly to choose a template to take to their seats to begin their self-portrait.
- If the first template children want are gone, ask children to choose their second choice.
- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #109

- Say, **"While you're working, I want us to vote on our class book cover. What type of art does it remind you of? Think about our ABCs. We only get one vote. If you like the first cover, stand up.** (Count children standing up.) **If you like the second cover, stand up** (Count children standing up.)**."**
- Share with children the cover they will use for their class book.
- Select the cover children select to create the class book for the next lesson.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #110

- While children are working, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair twice.
- Provide children time to work on their self-portraits and offer children support when necessary (making sure both words begin with the same sound and how to spell that sound).
- Share with children they can try their best to spell the rest of the sounds in the words.
- Estimated spellings are acceptable.
- Share with children if they run out of time, they will have time tomorrow to finish their self-portraits.
- Collect children's self-portraits.
- Print the book cover the class voted on to create the class book on the next day of instruction.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 3| Day 14: *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Class Book Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Cool Cuts (Roe, 2016)

Happy Hair (Roe, 2014)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

Class book cover (print the template children selected from the day before in the lesson plan)

Crayola's Color of the World Markers

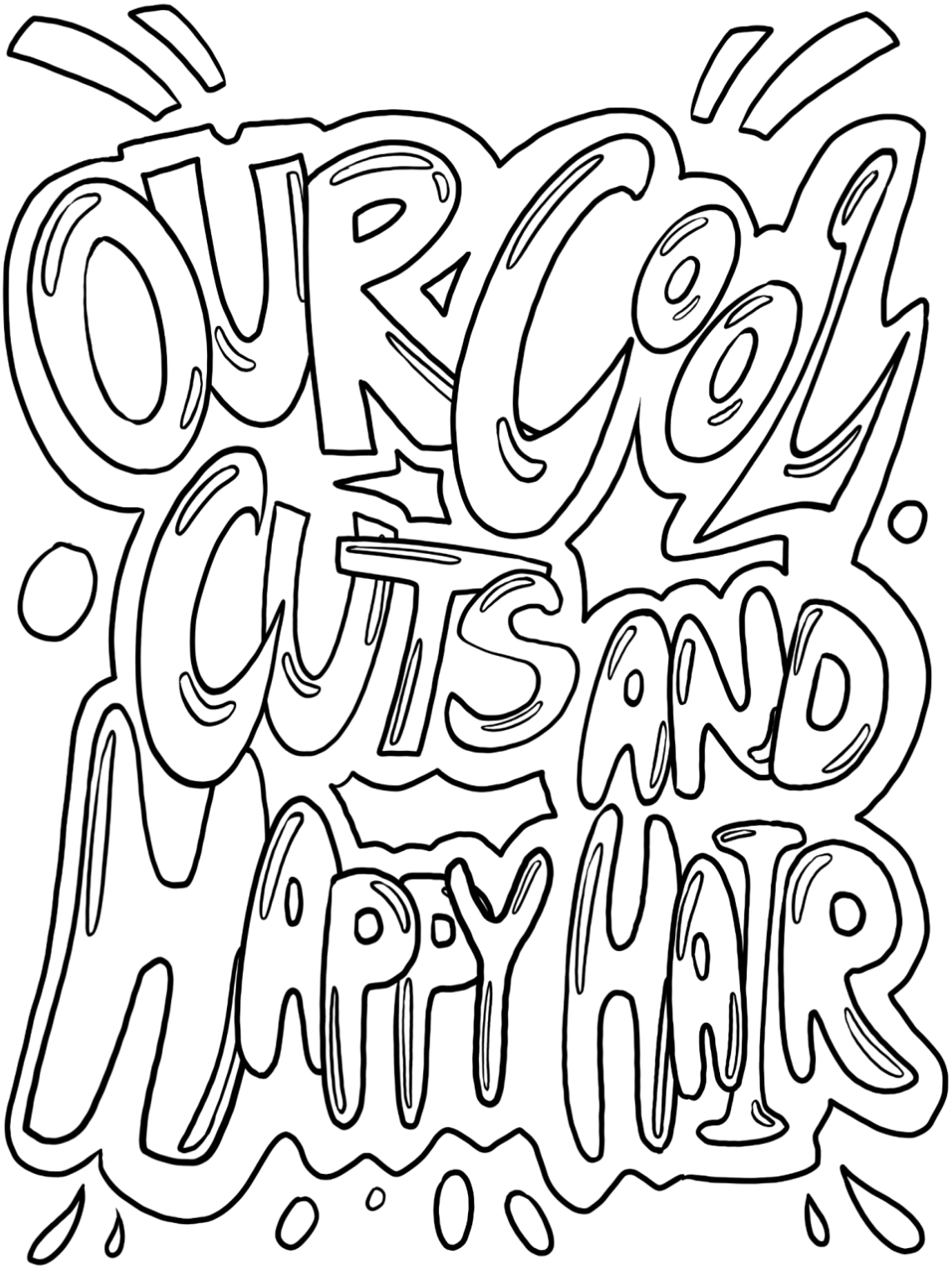
Crayola's Color of the World Crayons

Children's crayons

Children's markers

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in the Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)


OUR COOL
CUTS AND
HAPPY HAIR

OUR CAT
CUTS AND
HAPPY HAIR

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Day 13, slides 111 - 113) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #111

- Say, **"Today, we'll continue making self-portraits of our favorite hairstyles. While you're working, I'll continue to stop by and see how you are doing. If you're finished, you can take out your beginning sound dominoes and color the images or you can find a classmate and play beginning sound dominoes. One person will go first the first round, and your partner will go first the second time."**
- Pass out children's self-portraits.
- Visit each child to make sure they finished their self-portraits.
- If time permits, assemble the class book to read the book with children.
- If you do not have time, you can read the class book the following day of instruction.

SLIDE #112

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Say, **"We'll read Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair. When we turn to your self-portrait, you'll read the page for us and then we'll read it after you. After we read the page, we'll identify the beginning sound in both of the words."**
- For children who may not want to read their page to the class, consider allowing them to read the page to you directly (by allowing them to come up to you) and then you can read the page to the class.

- After reading the class book, share with children that you will put their class book in the classroom library.

SLIDE #113

- Say, **"We'll listen to Cool Cuts Happy Hair and sing along to help recognize the beginning sound in words."**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair in the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children's engagement with identifying beginning sounds.
- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Week 3| Day 15: More *Our Cool Cuts & Happy Hair* Book Read-Aloud & Identifying Beginning Sounds

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Cool Cuts (Roe, 2016)

Happy Hair (Roe, 2014)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in Instructional Slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Day 14, slides 114 - 116) to children.
- Scripted text is in **bold** in the Slides.

SLIDE #114

- Say, **"Today, we'll read Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair. When we turn to your self-portrait, you'll read the page for us and then we'll read the page after you. After we read the page, we'll identify the beginning sound in both of the words."**
- For children who may not want to read their page to the class, consider allowing them to read the page to you directly (by allowing them to come up to you) and then you can read the page to the class.
- If you are reading the class book a second day of instruction, consider allowing children to choose the voice they would like their classmates to read their page such as a robot.

- Show the next slide.

SLIDE #115

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Say, **"We'll read Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair. When we turn to your self-portrait, you'll read the page for us and then we'll read it after you. After we read the page, we'll identify the beginning sound in both of the words."**
- For children who may not want to read their page to the class, consider allowing them to read the page to you directly (by allowing them to come up to you) and then you can read the page to the class.
- After reading the class book, share with children that you will put their class book in the classroom library.

SLIDE #116

- Say, **"We'll listen to Cool Cuts Happy Hair and sing along to help us recognize the beginning sound in words."**
- Play Cool Cuts Happy Hair n the Slides.
- Reference Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics on the next page to support children's engagement with identifying beginning sounds.
- If time permits or if children request, play Cool Cuts Happy Hair a second time.

Cool Cuts Happy Hair (recognizing beginning sounds)

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I hit the chair like how I'ma get my hair?
Whatever I choose I know they gone stare.

Perfect ponytails or fab fro,
Captivatin' curls, creative cornrows.
Beautiful braids, wonderful waves (aye).
And that polish press slay.

Locs lit or you can get a fresh fade (aye).
Love your hair every way.

His haircut make him feel fresh.
Her hairdo make her feel new.
They haircut make them feel fresh.
Their hairdo make them feel new.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

I need you to tell what sound it start with.
You got that kids.
I need you to tell what sound it start with.
Okay, let's hear it.

(After hearing the alliterative phrases in the second verse, teachers can rename the phrase, emphasizing the beginning sounds and ask children to say the sound.)
Lit locs.
Fab fro.
Bad buns.
Hip hijab.
Wet waves.
Cute curls.

Cool cuts, happy hair, make them all stop and stare (repeat four times).

Farewell Lesson | Day 16: Y is for Yo Mama

Goal(s) for Children

I can recognize the beginning sounds in words.

Materials

Your Mama (Ramos, 2021)

Di•VERSE Literacy Slides (Week 3, Days 11 - 15)

Song: Cool Cuts Happy Hair (in Instructional slides)

Cool Cuts Happy Hair lyrics (in the lesson plan)

Procedure

- Gather children in the meeting area or on the classroom carpet.
- Show *Di•VERSE Literacy* Slides (Week 3, Day 16, slides 117 - 137) to children.
- Review "Y" wall card.
- Introduce the text to children.
- Read the text to children.
- Revisit "Y" alphabet card.
- Go over yo mama compliment examples like the tongue ticklers.
- Provide children time to think of a yo mama compliment with scaffolding and support.
- Provide children various templates to choose from to write their yo mam compliments.
- Provide children space to share their compliments with classmates.

Name: **Ashley** _____ Pre-Assessment Date: 9/10/24 Post-Assessment Date: 10/9/24

Di•VERSE Literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Beginning Reading and Writing Assessment

Initial Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Beginning Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I will say a word and you will say the first sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word rip, you would say the beginning sound is /r/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
mad	/m/	✓ ✓	
locs	/l/	✓ ✓	
nose	/n/	✓ ✓	
wet	/w/	✓ ✓	7 /7
bad	/b/	✓ ✓	
star	/s/	✓ ✓	
shop	/sh/	✓ ✓	

Final Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Ending Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I will say a word and you will say the last sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word rip, you would say the last sound is /p/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
kiss	/s/	/i/ ✓	
comb	/m/	/k/ ✓	
tail	/l/	/t/ ✓	
sun	/n/	✓	0 /7
hat	/t/	✓	7
cap	/p/	✓	
brush	/sh/	✓	

Medial Phoneme Isolation (Identifying Middle Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I'll give you a word and you'll say the middle sound you hear. For example, if I give you the word cat, you would tell me the middle sound is /ă/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sound or the letter name. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
cut	/ŭ/ ✓	✓	
fab	/ă/ ✓	/th/	
pom	/ŏ/ ✓	✓	
bet	/ĕ/ ✓	✓	7 6 /7
lit	/ĭ/ ✓	✓	
cape	/ā/ ✓	✓	
dope	/ō/ ✓	✓	

Blending Phonemes (Sliding Through Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I'll give you some sounds. Then you'll slide through the sounds to give me the word. For example, if I give you the sounds /l/ /ĭ/ /p/, you would tell me the word is *lip*. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sounds, letter names, or words. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Phonemes	Correct Response	Child's Response	Notes and Results
/ă/ /t/	at ✓	✓	
/b/ /ō/	bow ✓	boat	
/j/ /ĕ/ /l/	gel ✓	✓	
/m/ /ŏ/ /m/	mom ✓	✓	
/h/ /ĭ/ /p/	hip ✓	✓	6 /7 7
/d/ /ă/ /p/	dap ✓	✓	
/p/ /ŭ/ /f/	puff ✓	✓	

Segmenting Phonemes (Separating Sounds in Spoken Words)

Directions: Say, "I'll give you the word. Then you'll give me the sounds. For example, if I gave you the word *lip*, you would tell me the sounds are /l/ /ĭ/ /p/. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" Please indicate if children are providing the sounds or the letter names for each sound in the word. If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Correct Response	Child's Response		Notes and Results
low	/l/ /ō/	✓	✓	
up	/ŭ/ /p/	✓	✓	
red	/r/ /ĕ/ /d/	✓	✓	
cap	/k/ /ă/ /p/	✓	✓	7 /7
hit	/h/ /ĭ/ /t/	✓	✓	
love	/l/ /ŭ/ /v/	✓	✓	
waves	/w/ /ā/ /v/ /s/	✓	✓	

Decoding (Reading Words)

Directions: Say, "When you're ready, you can begin reading the list of words. If you get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Child's Response	Word	Child's Response	Notes and Results
if	✓	kid	✓	
at	✓	bun	✓	
mad	✓	best	bet	
top	✓	locs	✓	
dab	✓	cuts	✓	9 0 /10

Encoding (Spelling Words)

Directions: Say, "When you're ready, you'll spell some words. If we get to a tricky word, we'll skip it and go to the next one. Ready?" If a child misses three in a row, you may end the assessment section.

Word	Child's Response	Word	Child's Response	Notes and Results
as	✓	pat	✓	
in	✓	box	✓	
not	✓	next	nex ✓	
win	✓	just	jus ✓	
rub	✓	hand		0 /10

Number of Correct Responses

Being introduced to the targeted skill: 0-4/7 or 0-6/10 responses

Exploring the targeted skill: 5/7 or 7/10 responses

Displaying the targeted skill: 6-7/7 or 8-10/10 responses

Ashley 9/10/24

1. N
2.
3
4
5
6
7.
8.
9.
10.

Ashley 10/9/24

1. as
2. in
3 not
4 win
5 rab
6. Pat
7. box
8. nex
9. We jus
10. Inabeni

if

at

mad

top

dab

kid

bun

best

locs

cuts

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS UTILIZING STORYTELLING

Week 1| Individual Reflection and Focus Group Interviews Utilizing Storytelling

First, children will reflect on their experiences individually. Then, the children will participate in focus group interviews utilizing storytelling in small groups (4-5 children).

After Week 1 Lessons

Individual Reflection

This (last) week, we played with familiar sounds we might hear in places in our community, like the barbershop, the hair salon, a city like Downtown (Children's city), and the park or the playground. We went over the ABC wall cards and the pictures. We listened to the story *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* and thought about the beginning sound in some of the words. We repeated some tongue ticklers and sang the song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair. Draw a picture of yourself in your classroom, showing how you felt when you did these activities at school. Then think of one, two, or three words that describe how you felt, what you learned, and anything the activities made you think about.

Small Group Reflections

In small groups, you are going to tell Ms. Amber a story about what it was like completing the activities and listening to the story, *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut.* You can use your drawing, feelings, words, and thoughts about the book and activities to tell your story*.

*While children are utilizing storytelling to share their experiences with the curriculum, Ms. Amber will ask follow-up questions to better understand children's stories. Some of the clarifying questions she may ask include:

1. What connections did you make with the playing with sounds activity?
2. What connections did you make to the images on the ABC wall cards and alphabet chart?

3. What connections did you make to *Crown*?
4. Did you like the books? Why or why not?
5. Did you like the rap song and singing along? Why or why not?
6. Did these activities feel different than the other activities you did during other parts of the school day? Why or why not?
7. What was your favorite part? Why was that your favorite part?

Week 2 | Individual Reflection and Focus Group Interviews Utilizing Storytelling

First, children will reflect on their experiences individually. Then, the children will participate in focus group interviews utilizing storytelling in small groups (4-5 children).

After Week 2 Lessons

Individual Reflection

This (last) week, you listened to the story *Hair Story* and played with sounds in some of the words included in the book through different activities such as the tongue ticklers, singing the rap song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair, and playing beginning sound dominoes from *Hair Story* and *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut.* Draw a picture of yourself in your classroom, showing how you felt when you did these activities at school. Then think of one, two, or three words that describe how you felt, what you learned, and anything the activities made you think about.

Small Group Reflections

In small groups, you are going to tell Ms. Amber a story about what it was like completing the activities and listening to the story, *Hair Story.* You can use your drawing, feelings, and thoughts about the book and activities to tell your story*.

*While children are utilizing storytelling to share their experiences with the curriculum, Ms. Amber will ask follow-up questions to better understand children's stories. Some of the clarifying questions she may ask include:

1. What connections did you make to *Hair Story*?
2. Did you like the books? Why or why not?
3. What was your favorite part? Why was that your favorite part?
4. Did you like the Dominoes Game? Why or why not?

Week 3 | Individual Reflection and Focus Group Interviews Utilizing Storytelling

First, children will reflect on their experiences individually. Then, the children will participate in focus group interviews utilizing storytelling in small groups (4-5 children).

After Week 3 Lessons

Individual Reflection

This (last) week, you listened to the stories *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair* and played with sounds in some of the words included in the book, and sang the rap song, Cool Cuts Happy Hair. Then, you created your own self-portrait with your favorite hairstyle, used two words that began with the same beginning sound to name the hairstyle and read your page of the class book to your classmates. Draw a picture of yourself in your classroom, showing how you felt when you did these activities at school. Then think of one, two, or three words that describe how you felt, what you learned, and anything the activities made you think about.

Small Group Reflections

In small groups, you are going to tell Ms. Amber a story about what it was like listening to the stories, *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair,* and creating your class book, *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair.* You can use your drawing, feelings, and thoughts about the book and activities to tell your story*.

*While children are utilizing storytelling to share their experiences with the curriculum, Ms. Amber will ask follow-up questions to better understand children's stories. Some of the clarifying questions I may ask include:

1. Did you like the books? Why or why not?
2. Did you like creating your page in the class book? Why or why not?

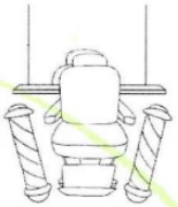
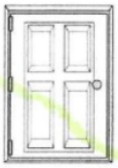
Week 1 | Day 4: Identifying Beginning Sounds Worksheet Based on *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*

Name: **Brittany**

Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the picture's name to complete the sentence. After, children will decide if both pictures' names begin with the same sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same sound, children will draw an "x" on both pictures to indicate they do not. Children will take out one crayon.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut Matching Beginning Sounds

By: Derrick Barnes and Illustrated by: Gordon C. James

1. When it's your turn in the  , you stand at attention and forget about who you were when you walked through that  .

2. The whole will be from the rows and rows of ripples. You'll have more waves on your head than the Atlantic Ocean.

3. (Shout out to my and patience.) There's a to the left of you with a faux-hawk, deep part, skin fade.

4. There are two dudes, one with , the other with .

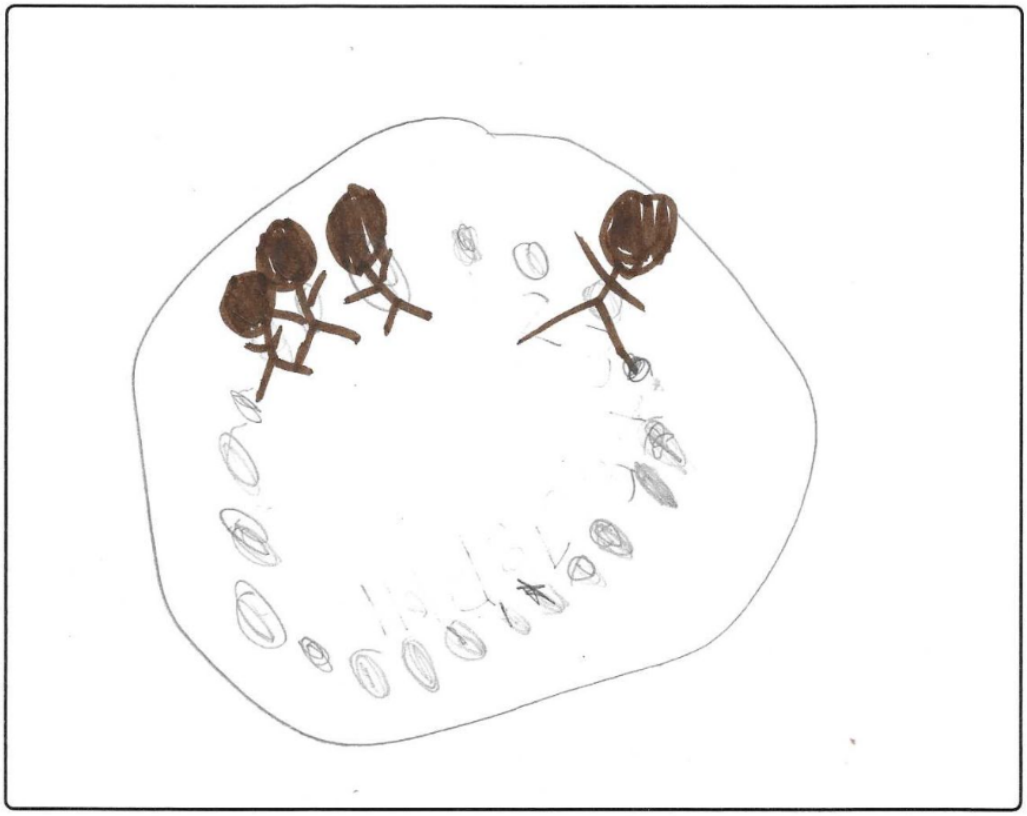
5. And when you see the cut yourself, in that handheld , you'll smile a really big smile. That's the you that you love the most. That's the you that wins-everything. That's the gold you.

6. Every person in the shop will rise to their and give you a round of applause for being so !

7. You'll put the in his hand without even expecting change back. Tip that !

Individual Reflection #1 on Days 1-4

Name: **Shayla**

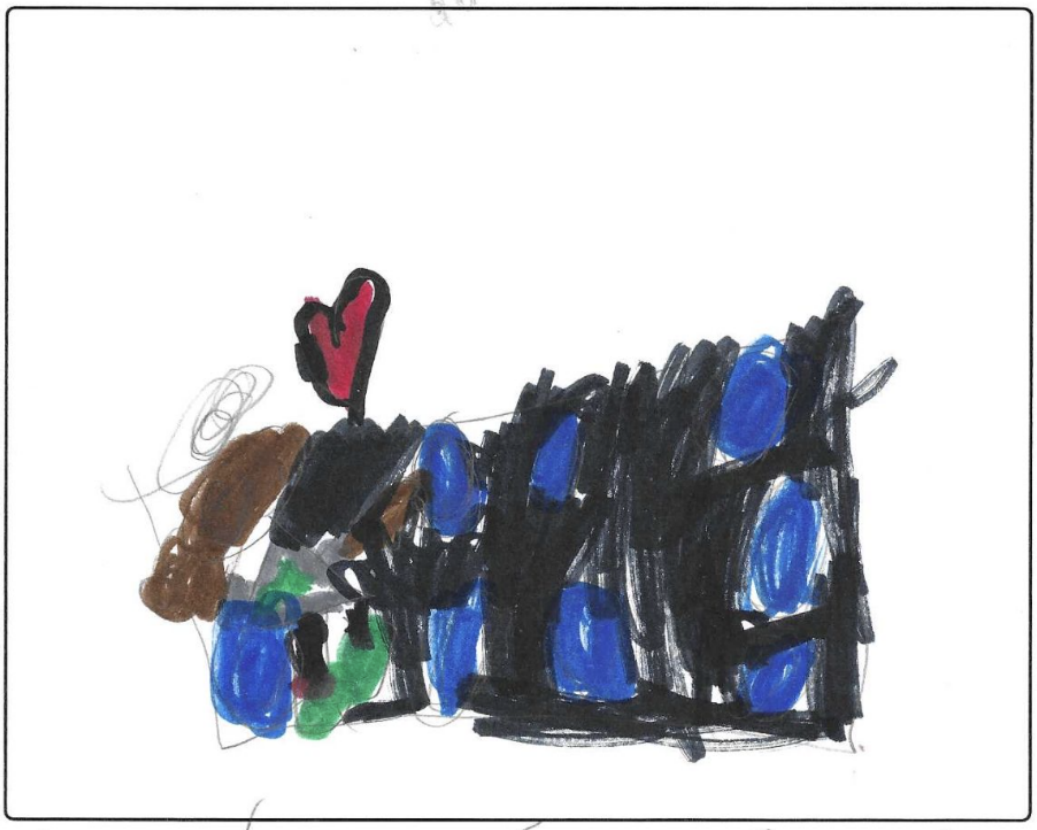


happy

Name: **Ashley**

Name: **Michelle**

Name: **Eli**

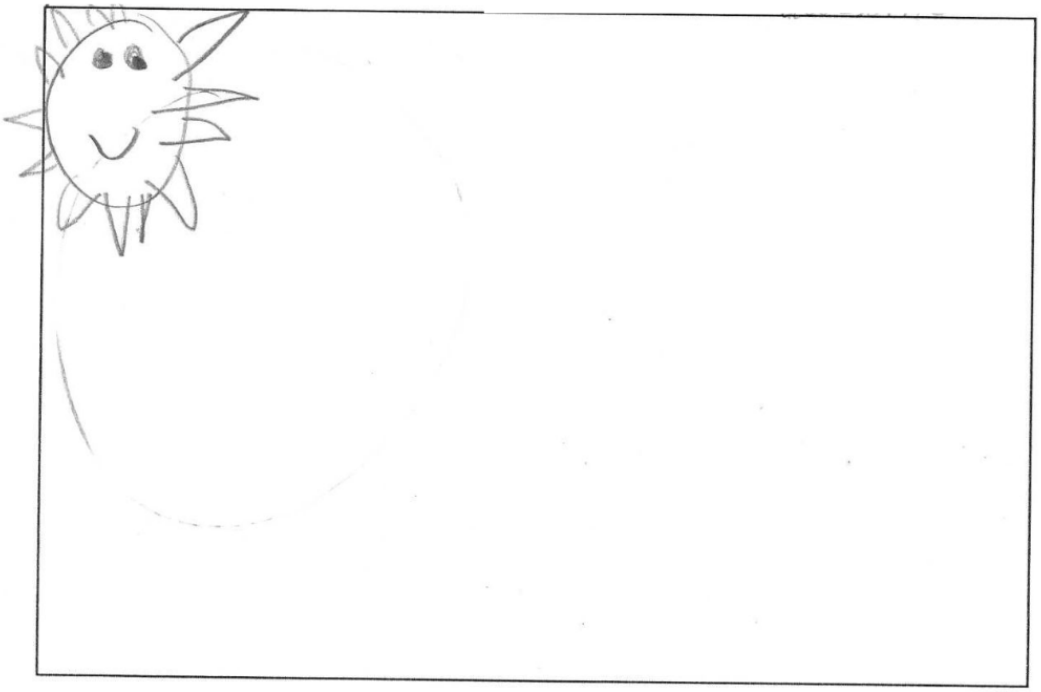


Week 2 | Day 6: Children's Tongue Ticklers Based on *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*

Names: Brittany and Kevin

FIR FLOWR

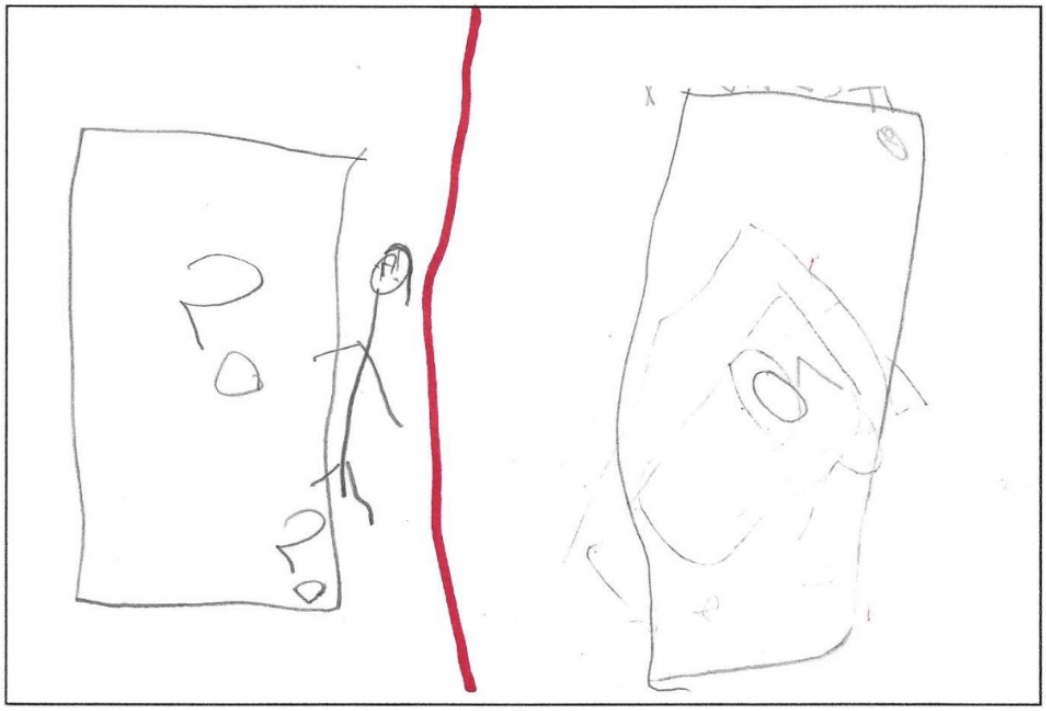
Names: Ashley and Eli



The sister size
sun is Asum!

Name: Walter

- **Names: Brianna and Destiny**



Week 2 | Day 7: Identifying Beginning Sounds Worksheet Based on *Hair Story*

Name: **Ashley** _____

Directions: The teacher will read each sentence and allow children to say the name of the picture to complete the sentence. After reading the page with children's responses. Children will decide if both names of the pictures begin with the same beginning sound. If the pictures begin with the same beginning sound, children will color both pictures the same color. If the pictures do not begin with the same beginning sound, children will draw an "x" to indicate the pictures do not begin with the same beginning sound.

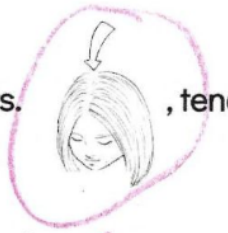
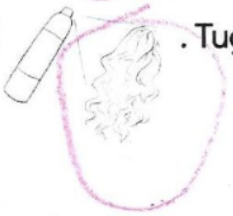
Hair Story

By: NoNieqa and Illustrated by: Keisha Morris

1. 's crown, lush, wild, beautiful brown: Puerto Rican princesa perfect lips, . Perfect skin. Perfect nose. Her eyes, just like Abuelo's.

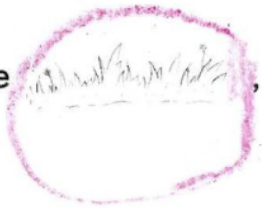
2. Rudine. Behold Black royalty! Hair a wreath of majesty. bestow blessings. Sing in harmony. Hallelujahs soar for the one they adore.

3. Ringlets, first steps. Red cap, ride Papi's back. Sloppy , fun. Tresses, kicks, and party dresses.

4. Strong hands. Stubborn knots.  , tender. Iron, hot. Straighten. Get used to waitin'. Spritz and  . Tug-of-brush. Is it done yet? Girl, don't rush.

5. Espejo, , ¿qué ves aquí? A fly Taíno queen. Generations of courage reflected in their eyes, foreva multiplied.

6. Fro-ments in time, and .

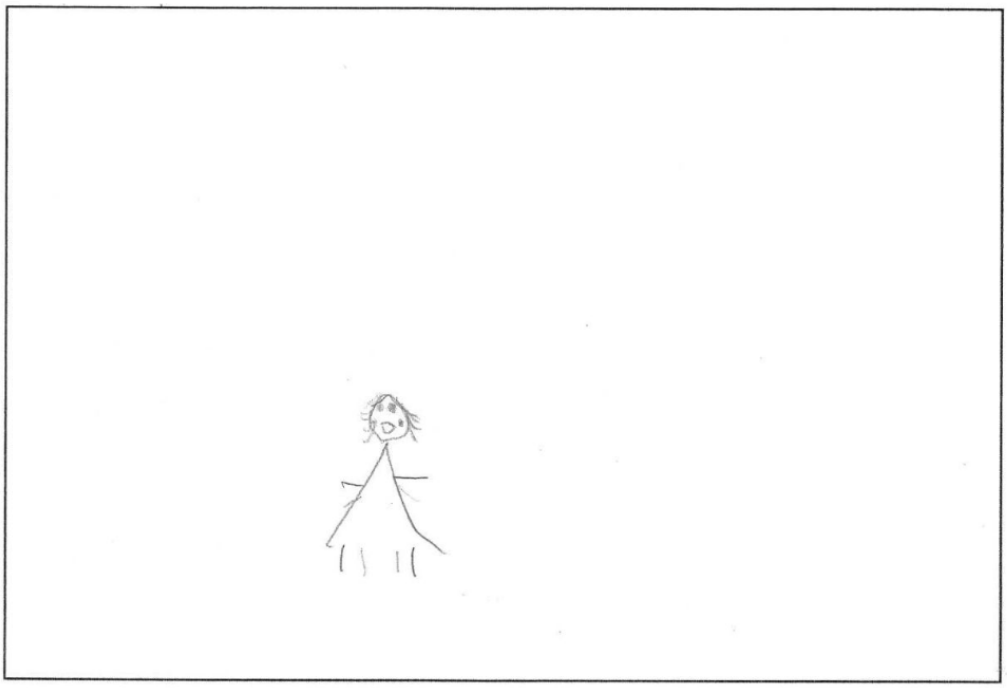
7. in the  , hair ridin' the breeze.

Week 2 | Day 9: Children's Tongue Ticklers Based on *Hair Story*

Name: Eli

Me and grandma like
dreds so do grandpa

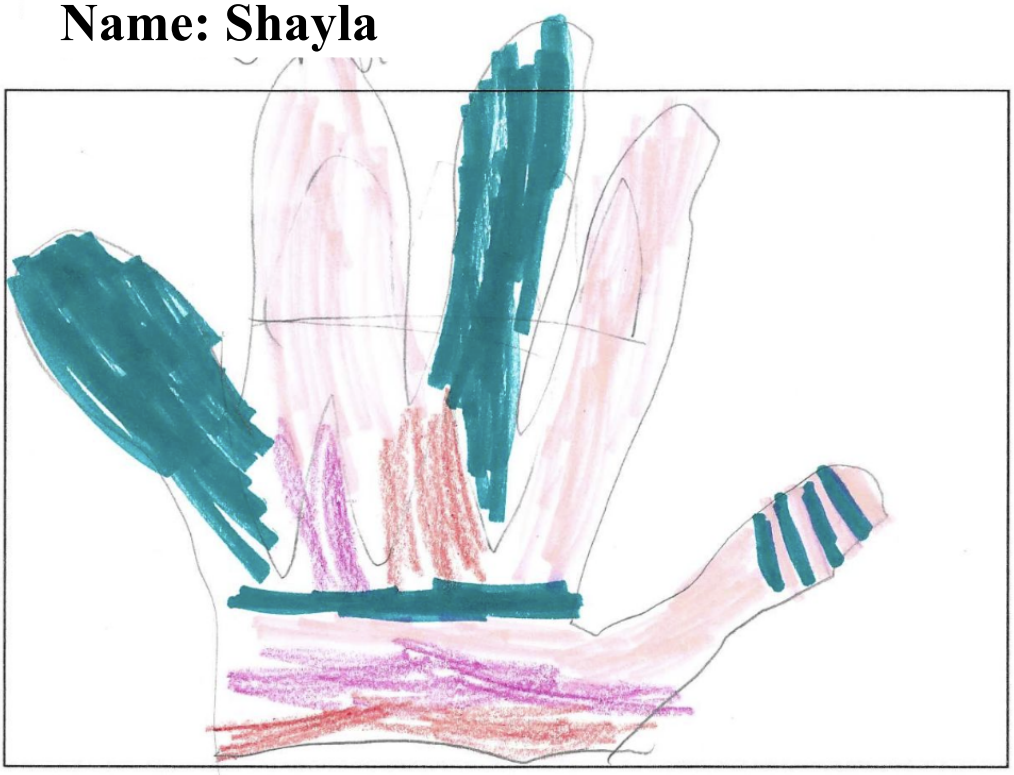
Name: Ashley



dol is dog duc is a.

dol Prindollar.

Name: Shayla



left hand.

Name: Michelle

Her Hand SAYS MAY

Individual Reflection #2 on Days 5-11

Name: **Alvin**

I like going to school.

Name: **Michelle**

I FELT BORED DURING PHONICS.

Name: **Aaron**

Week 3 | Day 13: Children's Class Text *Our Cool Cuts and Happy Hair*

Book Cover Colored By Michelle

"This book belongs to:

The Rainbow Dragons

who were made
beautifully, perfectly,
and lovely
in every way and
born to be awesome!

This book is dedicated to every

queen who has ever doubted her

beauty, her strength, and her

courageous spirit! Release her!

This book is also dedicated to every

king who has ever doubted his

courage, his flyness, and his

strength! Be free!"[1]

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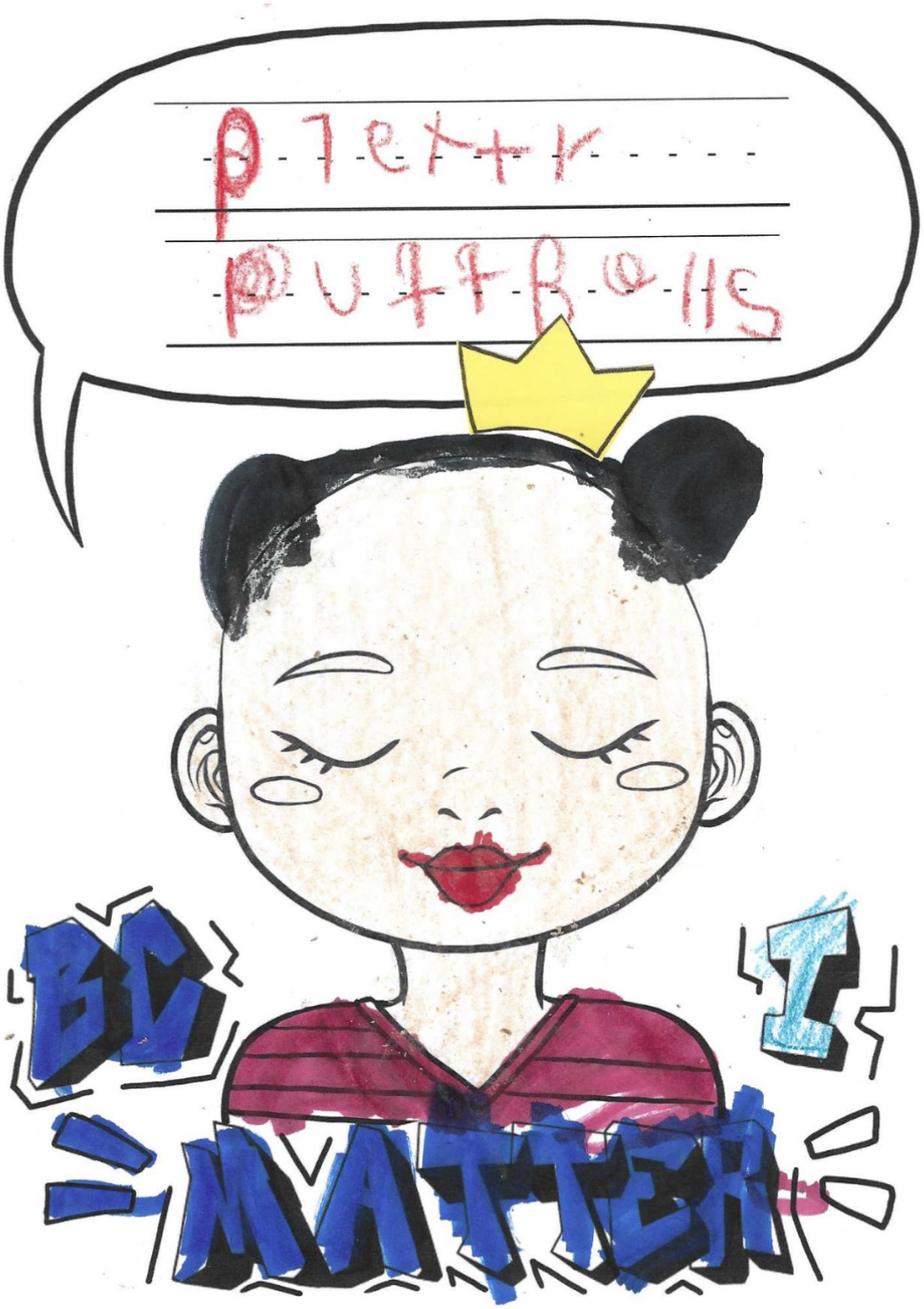
[1] This text was primarily written by Mechal Renee Roe from *Cool Cuts* and *Happy Hair*.



Brianna

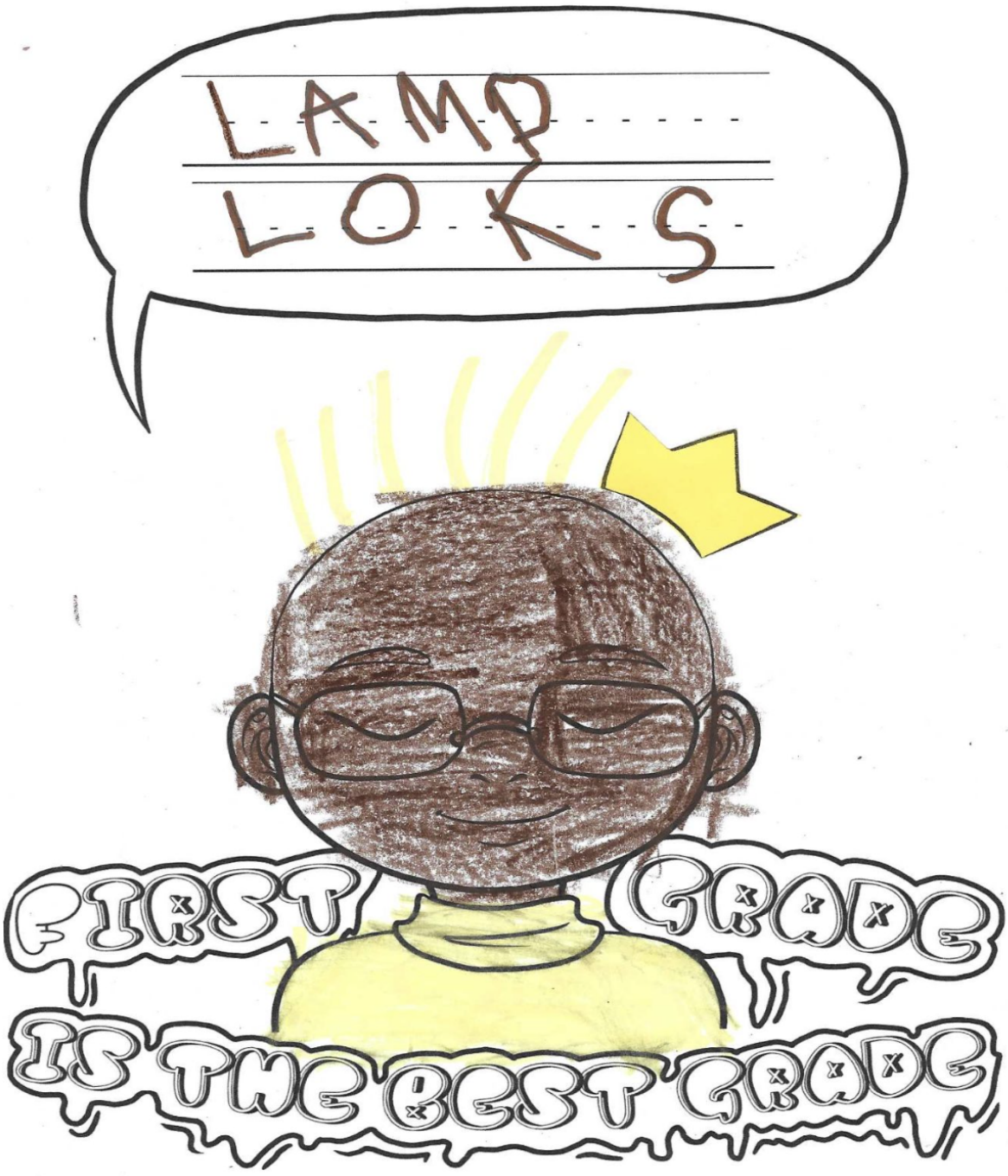
Eli

Michelle

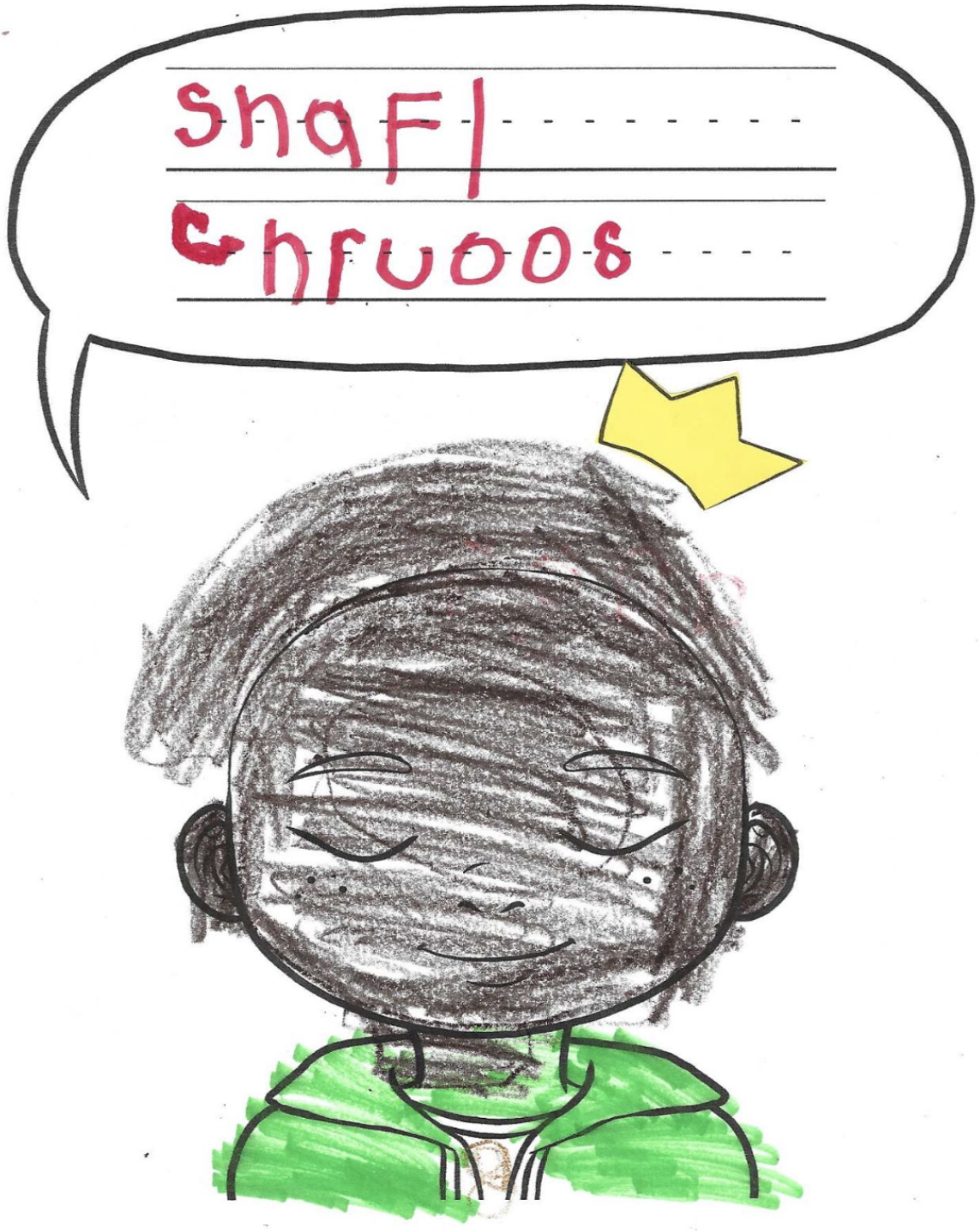
Simone

Ashley

Aaron



Brittany



Kevin

Shayla

Destiny

Alvin

Chris

Ms. Kos

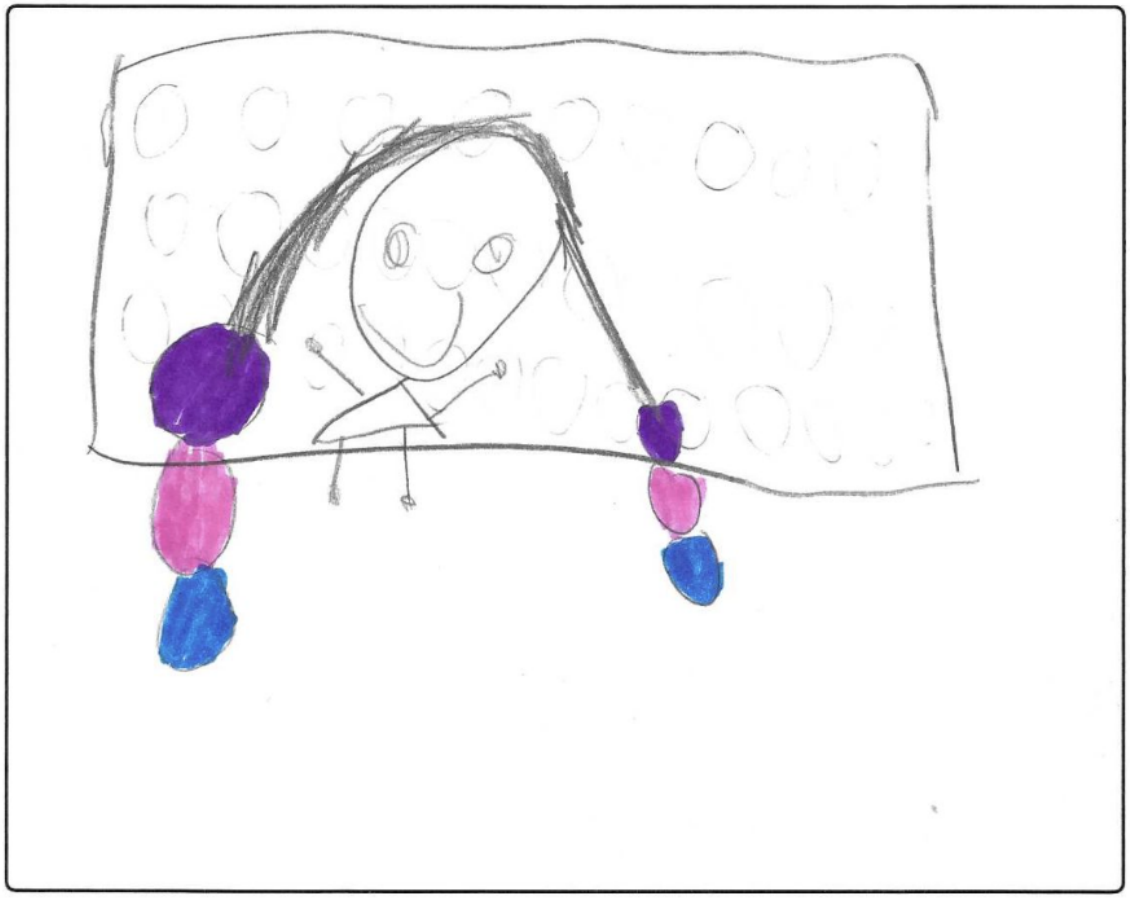
Individual Reflection #3 on Days 12-15

Name: **Michelle**

Name: **Ashley**

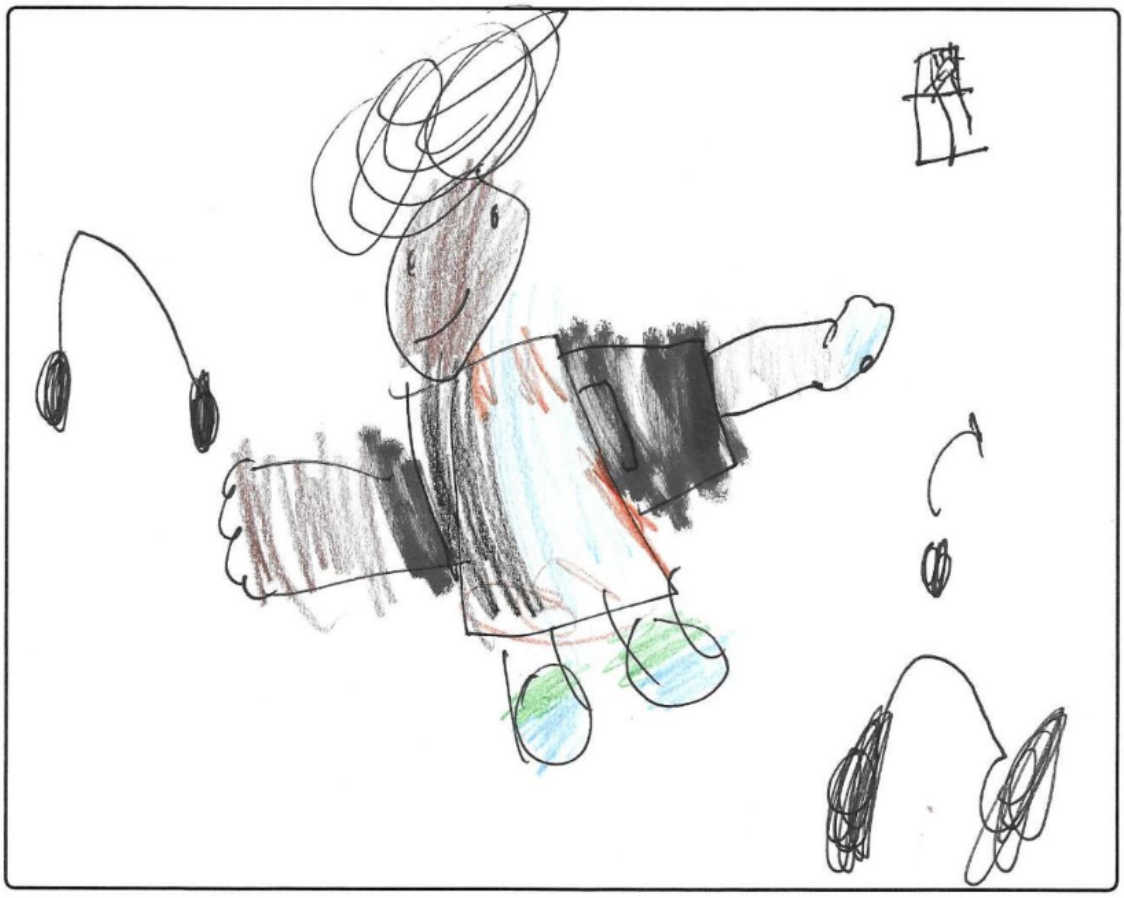
I Empathy.

Name: **Shayla**



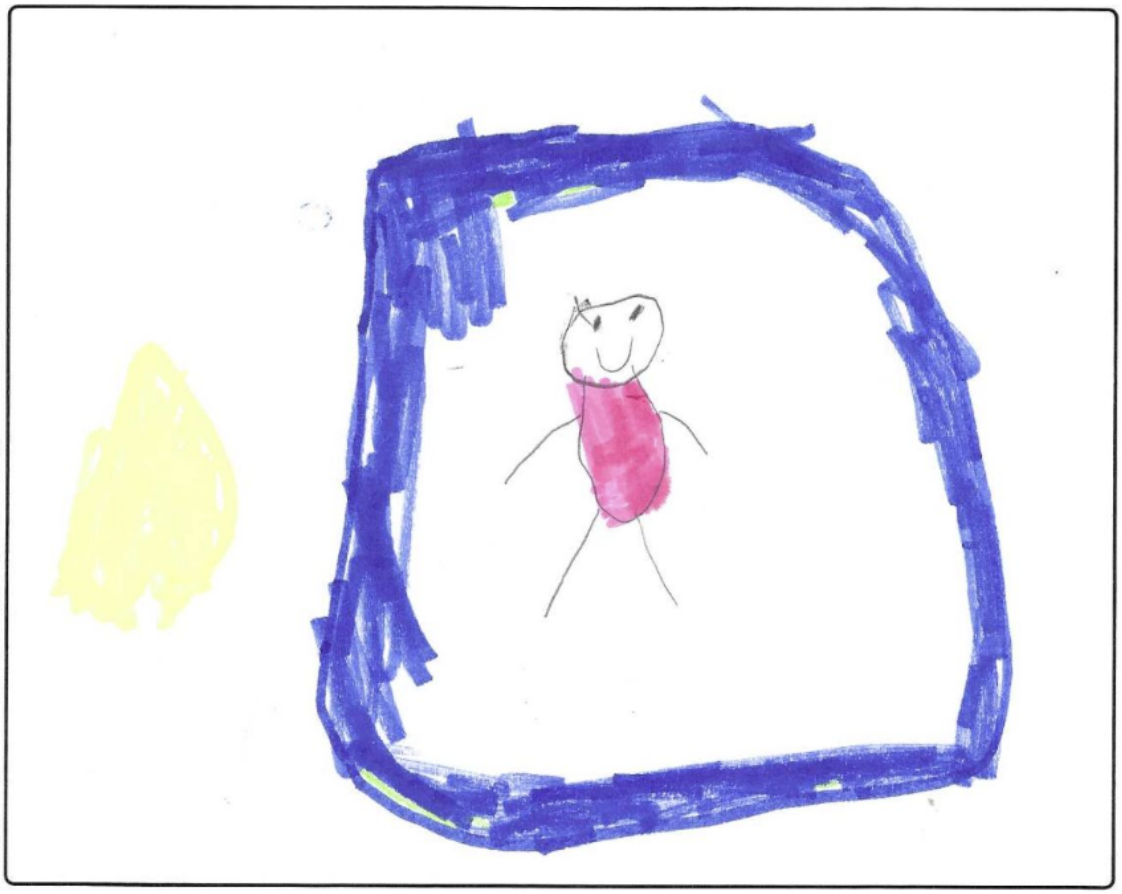
I was feling hape

Name: **Eli**



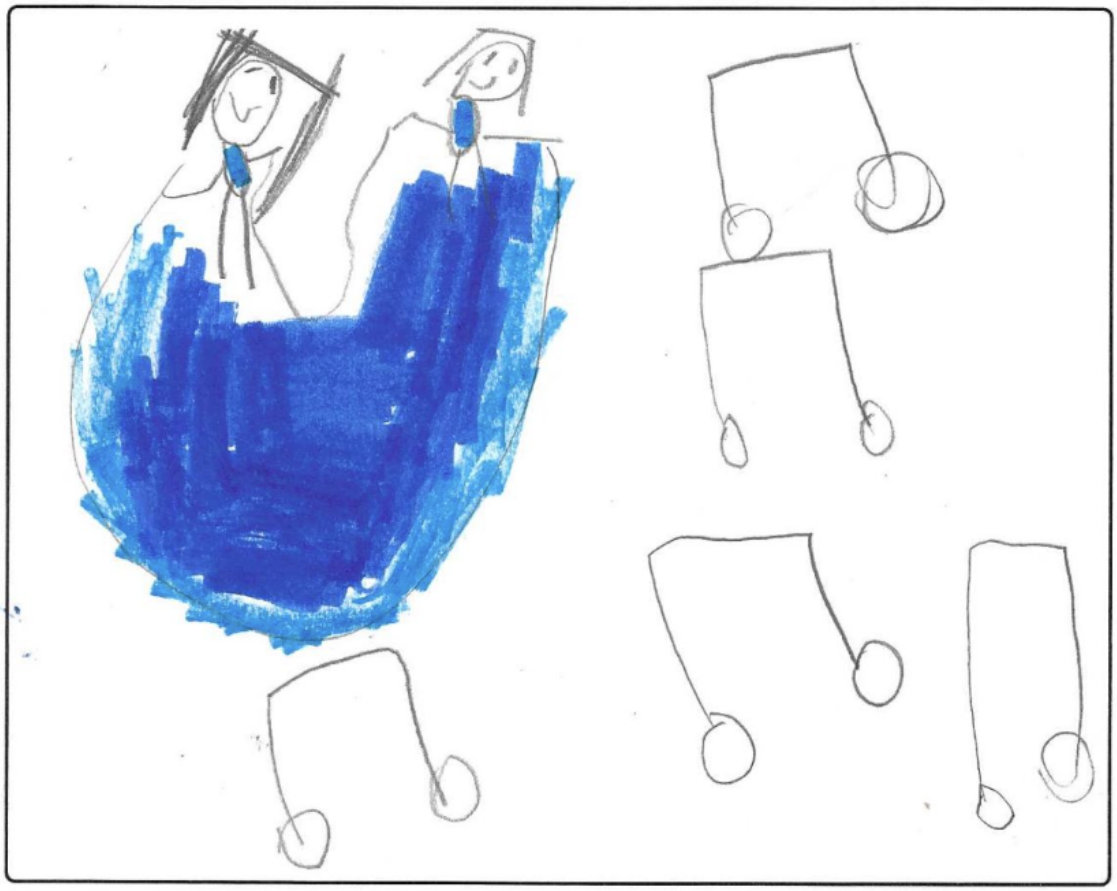
I was happy

Name: **Chris**



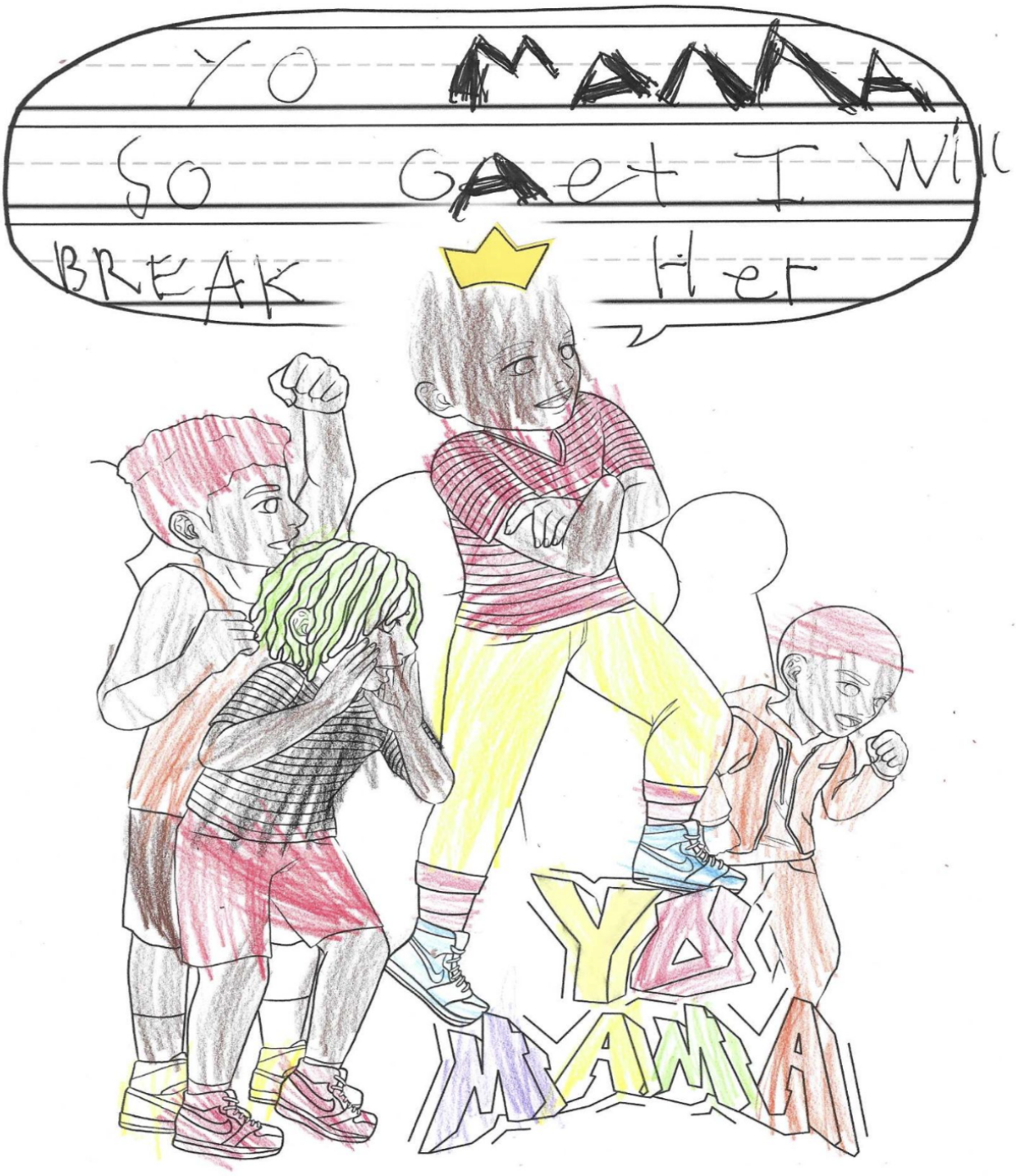
I had fun

Name: **Brittany**



Name **Alvin**

Farewell Lesson | Week 3 | Day 16: Children's Yo Mama Compliments



Eli

Ashley

Alvin